

*the Peak Volume 51 Issue 6*

# MAY! DAY!

*Commons not Capitalism*

*Creating Together*

May Day represents many things to many people. It is internationally recognized as a day where the working class mobilizes against the rich, appropriately named the 'real' labour day. It is a time to remember the Haymarket martyrs who died at the hands of the state. It also represents a time of change, as plants begin to produce their first fruits. May first is also known as beltane, a pagan holiday celebrating renewed fertility and life.

If due to climate change or just a freak cyclical weather pattern, Spring has come early this year, bring with it new growth and actions targeting domination and capital across the globe. Perhaps this is why it brought us so much joy, here at *the Peak*, when general assemblies associated with the occupy movement started to call for an International general strike against capitalism on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We have tried to amplify this call at *the Peak*.

Throughout the issue, we have included posters collected by the [occuprint.org](http://occuprint.org) collective, check out their website for print quality versions of these posters to litter your city with.

In this issue, we start off with two pieces on the importance of our collective memory of struggle (pg. 5) & comrades lost struggling against capitalism (pg. 7). Then we tell the story of May Day with the speeches (pg. 19) and history of the Haymarket martyrs (pg. 11). Next, we present analysis from May Day in Barcelona (pg. 31) and last years successful General Strike in Oakland, California (pg. 36), which both give us insight into the possibilities we have before us this coming May 1<sup>st</sup>. We follow that with analysis of the working conditions of migrant labours in North America (pg. 41, 53), whose precarious labour drives capitalism forward, and who without them, capital would falter. And finally, we end our magazine with calls for actions on May Day in Toronto, Hamilton & Internationally, as well as days of insurrection (pg. 63) to target capital in the lead up to May Day.

As the Federal and Provincial governments announce new austerity cuts to the sound of the labour movements funeral procession, we find our new hope in autonomous actions and wild cat strikes. The days of tired marches through the streets will come to an end as we recognize the power we hold by targeting capital where it gains its strength, from the sweat of our labour and the commodities we produce.

Heed the call and on May 1<sup>st</sup>, phone in sick, walk out of school, get your shop floor to strike and/or in the evening after work, join us in the streets for economic disruption to show the rich that we have not lost our fighting spirit and remember the fertility of revolt.

Resist // Occupy // General Strike

- *The Peak Collective*

AUGUST SPIES

ALBERT R. PARSONS

BRYAN HILL

BAY OF RAGE

STRANGERS IN A  
TANGLED WILDERNESS

EBERHARDT PRESS

MOTHER EARTH

OCCUPY OAKLAND  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MIDNIGHT NOTES AND  
FRIENDS

STRIKE EVERYWHERE

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THE ENTIRE PEAK  
COLLECTIVE!

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VOLUME 51, ISSUE 6  
MAY 2012

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**Front Cover:**  
Original art designed by Josh MacPhee



**Back Cover:**  
Designed by Guelph Anarchists For The Win!

May 1 - 2012

# General Strike

## The First Of May and The General Strike

**W**ITH the Spring awakening of Nature the dormant energies of the people are revived – the oppressed feel their self-consciousness and the joy of combat stirring within them.

Stormy March – the red month of revolution ; stirring May – the fighting month of the proletariat striving for independence. The basic revolutionary idea of the first of May has characterized all the battles of labour in modern times, and the historic origin and development of that idea prove its great significance for the labour movement.

The May idea – in the relation of its revolutionary spirit to labour struggles – first manifested itself in the economic battles of the Knights of labor. The final theoretical aim of that organization – founded by Uriah S. Stephens and fellow workers in 1869, and bearing a pronounced radical character in the beginning of its history – was the emancipation of the working classes by means of direct economic action. Its first practical demand was the eight-hour day, and the agitation to that end was an unusually strenuous one. Several strikes of the Knights of Labor<sup>1</sup> were practically General Strikes. The various economic battles of that period, supported by the American Federation of labor during its young days, culminated, on the first of May, 1886, in a great strike, which gradually assumed almost national proportions. The workingmen of a number of large cities, especially those

of Chicago, ceased their work on that day and proclaimed a strike in favour of the eight-hour day. They thus served notice on their capitalistic masters that henceforth they will not be submissively exploited by the unlimited greed of the capitalists, who had appropriated the means of production created by the many generations of labour, thus usurping the position of masters – the kind masters who had cordially leave labour the alternative of either prostituting their brawn or dying with the families of starvation.

The manly attitude of labour in 1886 was the result of a resolution passed by the labour Congress held at St. Louis, one year previously. Great demonstrations of a pronounced social revolutionary character took place all over the country, culminating in the strike of two hundred thousand workingmen, the majority of whom were successful in winning the eight-hour day.

But great principles of historic significance never triumph without a blood baptism. Such was also the case in 1886. The determination of the workingmen to decide to sell to the purchasers of labour was looked upon by the exploiters as the height of assumption, and condemned accordingly. Individual capitalists, though unwilling, were nevertheless forced to submit to the demands of organized labour ; perceiving, however, in the self-respecting attitude of the working masses a peril threatening the very foundations of the capitalistic economic system, they thirsted for revenge ; nothing less

<sup>1</sup> Definition and context of Knights of Labor:

1869-1949 The Knights of Labor (K of L) (officially "Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor") was the largest and one of the most important American labour organizations of the 1880s. The Knights of Labor were instrumental in the mobilizing that won the eight hour work day. At it's peak in 1886, the Knights of Labor held 700,000 members. The Knights of Labor held a general patriotic worker ethic and rejected revolutionary change.



would satisfy the cannibalistic masters but human sacrifices : the most devoted and advanced representatives of the movement – Parsons, Spies, Engel, Fischer and Lingg – were the victims.

The names of our murdered brothers, sacrificed to propitiate an enraged Moloch, will forever remain indivisibly linked with the idea of the first of May. It was the Anarchists that bore the brunt of those economic battles.

In vain, however, did organized capital hope to strangle the labour movement on the scaffold ; a bitter disappointment awaited the exploiters. True, the movement had suffered an eclipse, but only a temporary one. Quickly rallying its forces, it grew with renewed vigor and energy.

In December, 1888, the American Federation of labor decided to make another attempt to win the eight-hour day, and again by means of direct economic action. The strike was to be initiated by a gigantic demonstration on the first of May, 1890.

In the meantime there assembled at Paris (1889) an International Labor Congress. A resolution was offered to join the demonstration, and the day which three years previously initiated the eight-hour movement became the slogan of the international proletariat, awakened to the realization of the revolutionary character of its final emancipation. Chicago was to serve as an example.

Unfortunately, however, the direction was not followed. The majority of the congress consisting of political parliamentarists, believers in indirect action, they purposely ignored the essential import of the first of May, so dearly bought on the battlefield ; they decided that henceforth the first of May was to be “consecrated to the dignity of labour,” thus perverting the revolutionary significance of the great day into a mere appeal to the powers that be to grant the favour of an eight-hour day. Thus the parliamentarians degraded the noble

meaning of the historic day.

The first of May “consecrated to the dignity of labour!” As if slavery could be dignified by anything save revolutionary action. As long as labour remains mere prostitution, selling its producing power for money, and as long as the majority of humankind are excluded from the blessings of civilization, the first of May must remain the revolutionary battle cry of labour’s economic emancipation.

The effect of the Paris resolution soon manifested itself : the revolutionary energy of the masses became dormant; the wage slaves limited their activity to mere appeals to their masters for alleviation and to political action, either independent of, or in fusion with, the bourgeois parties, as is the case in England and America. They quietly suffered their representatives in Parliament and Congress to defend and strengthen their enemy, the government. They remained passive while their alleged leaders made deals with the exploiters, hobnobbed with the bourgeois, and were banquetted by the exploiters, while oppression steadily grew in proportion and intensity, and all attempts of the wage slaves to throw off their yoke were suppressed in the most merciless manner.

Only a small minority of the working class, especially in the Latin countries, remained true to the revolutionary spirit of the first of May; but the effect of their noble efforts was materially minimized by their international isolation, repressed as they were by the constantly growing power of the governments, strengthened by the reactionary political activity of the labour bodies.

**“The names of our murdered brothers... will forever remain indivisibly linked with the idea of the first of May. It was the Anarchists that bore the brunt of those economic battles.”**

But the disastrous defeats suffered by labour on the field of parliamentarism and pure-and-simple unionism have radically changed the situation in recent years. Today we stand on the threshold of a new era in the emancipation of labour: the dissatisfaction with the former tactics is constantly growing, and the demand is being voiced for the most energetic weapon at the command of labour – the General Strike.

It is quite explicable that the more progressive working people of the world should hail with enthusiasm the idea of the General Strike. The latter is the truest reflex of the crisis of economic contrasts and the most decisive expression of the intelligent dissatisfaction of the proletariat.

Bitter experience has gradually forced upon organized labour the realization that it is difficult, if not impossible, for isolated unions and trades to successfully wage war against organized capital; for capital is organized, into national as well as international bodies, co-operating in their exploitation and oppression of labour. To be successful, therefore, modern strikes must constantly assume ever larger proportions, involving the solidaric co-operation of all the branches of an affected industry – an idea gradually gaining recognition in the trades

unions. This explains the occurrence of sympathetic strikes, in which people in related industries cease work in brotherly co-operation with their striking brothers – evidences of solidarity so terrifying to the capitalistic class.

Solidaric strikes do not represent the battle of an isolated union or trade with an individual capitalist or group of capitalists; they are the war of the proletariat class with its organized enemy, the capitalist regime. The solidaric strike is the prologue of the General Strike.

The modern worker has ceased to be the slave of the individual capitalist; today, the capitalist class is their master. However great their occasional victories on the economic field, they still remains a wage slave. It is, therefore, not sufficient for labour unions to strive to merely lessen the pressure of the capitalistic heel; progressive working people's organizations can have but one worthy object – to achieve their full economic stature by complete emancipation from wage slavery.

That is the true mission of trades unions. They bear the germs of a potential social revolution; aye, more – they are the factors that will fashion the system of production and distribution in the coming free society.

The proletariat of Europe has already awakened to a realization of their great mission; it remains for the American workers to decide whether they will continue, as before, to be satisfied with the crumbs off the board of the wealthy. Let us hope that they will soon awaken to the full perception of their great historic mission, bearing in mind the battle scars of former years. Especially at this time, when organized capital of America - the most powerful and greedy of the world - is again attempting to repeat the tragedy of 1887, American labour must warn the overbearing masters with a decisive "Thus far and no further!"

**“Solidaric strikes do not represent the battle of an isolated union or trade with an individual capitalist or group of capitalists; they are the war of the proletariat class with its organized enemy, the capitalist regime. The solidaric strike is the prologue of the General Strike.”**

*From Mother Earth Vol. II May, 1907 No. 3*

# Memory As a Weapon by Anonymous

Note: Translated from German  
No. 2, Fall 2010, an anarchist  
publication from Santiago, Chile.

Memory, the expression, the act of evoking images, events, and people from the past never has meaning for us except as an accumulation of dates or a demonstration of erudition.

The collective construction of insurrectionary memory has as its goal the historic continuity of the struggle; the events, the victories, the losses, the successes, and the errors. But it should not be limited to that because it is also important that it results in becoming acquainted with the different tools and strategies adopted by the enemy. Our struggle does not only free us from

the world since the day we were born, but also transcends every vestige of authority in eternal struggle.

Power has implemented on its behalf a machine of forgetting, each time more perfect and macabre, in order to maintain actual conditions in its favor. Amnesia only generates an acceptance of imposed reality while observing past struggles or comrades like photographs,

severing every connection with reality, achieved by showing how unfeasible every intent to disobey the masters is.

When revolutionaries are preoccupied echoing forgetfulness by living in an eternal present they grossly limit the actual struggle by not taking into account the rich arsenal of useful forms, tools, visions, manner, and experience of the insurrectionary memory. To forget past struggles is to forget who gave their lives and energy to change this reality.

To pierce the erasure of time, remembering and assuming the different contexts and the unrepeatable idyllic and exactly equal conditions is a direct and real support to the social war. To sharpen, expand, and make evident the conflict against the powerful is extremely necessary and possible in the present as well as in the past. Our combative history is the rebellion of different exploited who decided to actively oppose the established order, breaking free from the different forms of normalcy of their time.

Memory; the past is our present, its thoughts have been ours, its desires to attack are the same as ours today. We are talking about the history of revolt for centuries, years, or a pair of painful months. Now we are here remembering Mauri, comrade of so many fighters, but not only is this memory individual, it is also the continuation of the urgent need to oppose domination.

Our present will become the past of the future through consistent exercise of conveying the past to the next combatants and the next repressive circumstances. To remember the struggle in the present is to glimpse which road we have walked upon, to help understand where to place our next steps - this is to use insurrectionary



29th, 1985 because they were part of an armed struggle group named MIR and dedicated to political militants. The Johnny Cariqueo social center in Pudahuel recently celebrated it's third year of being open. A group calling themselves the Johnny Cariquero Comandos carried out a bombing of a central Santiago police station on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, citing both Claudia Lopez and Johnny Cariqueo in a communique.

Mauricio Morales aka Punky Mauri died on May 22<sup>th</sup>, 2009 after an explosive device he had been carrying to the School for Correctional Officers in Santiago blew up in his backpack. He was twenty-seven years old.

**“Thank you for teaching us that, against power, the only lost battle is the one not fought.”**

- *Diego Rios*

[illegible]

Claudia Lopez died after being shot in the back by Carabineros (police) in the poblacion La Pincoya in Santiago on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1998 during annual riots and armed confrontations with the police commemorating fallen comrades and the U.S. backed military coup of 1973. She was twenty-nine years old. In 2005 an occupied social center opened under the name Claudia Lopez in Concepcion, Chile.

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# Fallen Comrades

*Editors' note: This was a speech given on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 during an remembrance day event in Vancouver, BC (Occupied Salish Territory). The event celebrated the lives and struggle of Anarchists and Anti-Authoritarian comrades who have died in the struggle for freedom and autonomy.*

## INTRODUCTION/INTENTIONS

One hundred and twenty-three years ago today, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Albert Parsons and August Spies were hung in Chicago for the crime of dedicating their lives towards Anarchy and Revolution. Their comrade Louis Lingg was also sentenced to death, but he had managed to have dynamite smuggled into prison, which he used to blow off his own head in order to deprive the state the luxury of taking his life.

They were initially arrested in connection to a bomb that was thrown at police during a demonstration in Haymarket Square. There was no evidence of their connection to this bomb and in fact it is very unlikely that there was any. This has caused many historians to paint them as innocent victims. Although they were victims of a very tragic wave of State repression used to crush the vibrant anarchist movement in Chicago, we are here tonight not to celebrate their innocence, but rather their guilt. They were guilty of at least ten years of incessant agitation in Chicago towards the revolutionary destruction of capitalism and the state and encouraging working people and the unemployed to organize resistance and kill their exploiters. As Lucy Parsons, the wife of one of the hanged men, very succinctly put it, "Learn the use of explosives!!"

Louis Lingg himself is confirmed to have been making bombs to be used in the social war. He even stated in court that he couldn't have been at the demonstration because he was at home making dynamite. During their trial, none of the condemned men made any effort to repent their anarchist principles and remained defiant until the end. In the last words of August Spies, "The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the


voices you are throttling today." These words were the seeds that would blossom throughout the United States and many parts of the world over generations to come. Emma Goldman and many other outspoken agitators said they became anarchists upon reading the statements of the Haymarket comrades.

From then until now, there have been far too many Anarchists who have died in the struggle for us to cover in one night. From the state executions of U.S. Italian Anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti and the death of the lesser known, Carlo Valdinoci; to Crazy Horse and all the Native Warriors who died fighting for freedom right up to Joe Stuntz Killright and Anna Mae Aquash. Warriors who although never carried an anarchist flag were fighting for societies free of State control and capitalist exploitation. From all the individualists and other anarchist rebels who died while expropriating or killing members of the ruling class; to comrades such as Ricardo Flores Magon, Kuwalsi Balagoon and the countless others who died in prison serving time for revolutionary activity. From the sailors of Kronstadt and peasants of the Ukraine to the insurgents of Andalusia and Catalonia and the many other regions of the world who liberated territory from government control only to be stabbed in the back by their supposed comrades.

Even Haymarket square itself, on that rainy night of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1886, was strewn with the bodies of anarchists, most of whose names we will never know. Tonight we honour all of the proud rebels who have fallen in the struggle, but will be focusing on comrades who have lost their lives in the first decade of this century.



# THE PAST DOESN'T PASS



MAY FIRST, 2010, an anonymous crowd ran riot through the avenues of Asheville's Grove Arcade. They smashed windows to businesses, banks, ATM's, and expensive cars. They blockaded the tourist area with newspaper bins and trashcans. The event lasted 10 minutes and all of the evidence that *something happened* was covered in 10 days. Although there have been 11 arrests, every step taken—by the police, by the media, and by the little politicians—has been in order to *conceal* this event. They reduce it to "mindless vandalism"; they paint the arrestees as spoiled rich kids, they console us by saying "this was just an exception, but its okay now, we got the guilty party." *Why do they want us to forget?*

MAY FOURTH, 1886, after a demonstration for the 8 hour work day was brutally repressed four days earlier, an equally anonymous crowd met at Haymarket Square in Chicago. The police arrived to suppress the crowd. A bomb was thrown in their direction; a viscous riot ensued; gunshots took the lives of 8 police officers. Afterward, 8 anarchists were the victims of retribution. Each were tried for murder; 4 were hung, and 1 took his own life in prison. All of this despite the fact that the prosecution conceded that none of the 8 threw the bomb—much less were even at Haymarket Square. Mayday—May first—grew from this.

Mayday is the single day celebrating the tradition of fervent struggle that won us an 8 hour workday. But what May first, 2010 teaches us is that the bloody struggle that took the lives of our great grandparents has not passed. Their struggle was never just about an "8 hour work-day"—of which the present working day makes a mockery. Their struggle was against work. Their struggle was against capitalism, the police, and the society that upholds of this misery. If today the media conspires with the police—with the politicians, with the bosses—to conceal this fact, it is because they know that Mayday means class war.

The Asheville 11 are the casualties of class war. Like many others who are caught up in a struggle that they didn't begin, they are our heroes. They are the anonymous "every person." Anything that happens to the Asheville 11 could happen to any of us. In a society based on superfluous labor, we are all very replaceable. We can lose our jobs for

any reason; landlords can evict us from our homes if it serves their pocket book; we can be abducted by police bullets for having something shiny in our hands or falling mentally ill. Or we could be arrested for simply being present at an event. *Any* one of us could fall victim to the potential consequences of living in this society.

The cops and bosses know that the past doesn't pass. Because they have systematically extracted revolutionary elements from the social, revolt is finding a different place to take place. History will tell the story of such "every persons" who broke down, who accidentally lead a charge, and who found each other in their stumbling. The Asheville 11 are of this story. If they are guilty of their crimes, then their deeds are that much more glorious. If they are acquitted or found not guilty, then we are all that much more anonymous. The media and the police conspire to conceal the meaning of Mayday because the Asheville 11 could be anyone. And the truth is, they are.

UNTIL CLASS SOCIETY IS ABOLISHED UNTIL THE PAST IS OURS

# ETERNAL WAR





## Compiled by Bryan Hill

**O**n May 1st, 2010, eleven people were arrested and charged with nearly 20,000 dollars worth of damage to storefront and car windows in a tourist section of downtown Asheville, North Carolina. Picked at random, the eleven people were swept off the sidewalk at random several blocks from the scene of the vandalism; when one asked why they were being detained, a police officer was quoted as saying that his instructions were to detain any young people in the area carrying bags or backpacks, or anyone who appeared to be breathing heavily.

Initially, each person was charged with ten misdemeanors for damage to property. With the eleven incarcerated, investigators used the next few days to scour the law books for any applicable charges they could tack on, eventually coming up with three felony charges for each individual: conspiracy, rioting, and damage to property over 5,000 dollars were added, and their bond was ratcheted up to 65,000 dollars a piece.

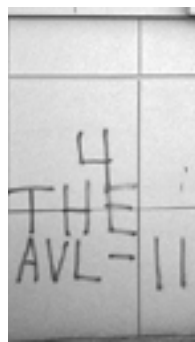
While their bail was set at 65,000 dollars, they are accused of less than 20,000 dollars worth of vandalism to windows of businesses and cars. Those being scapegoated for this damage now each face over five years in jail.

Interestingly, each of the arrestees face exactly the same charges – in other words, eleven people arrested at random are being charged with breaking the same ten windows, and folks who met for the first time in jail are being charged with conspiring together to commit specific acts of vandalism. Meanwhile, the Asheville Police Department held a press conference labelling all of the arrestees as “anarchists,” with police chief Bill Hogan stating that they were part of an “anti-government, anti-capitalist May Day movement” and that they were each “loosely, or perhaps closely, connected to an anarchist website.”<sup>1</sup>

Sensationalized coverage spread through news outlets all across the US, provoking shock and outrage. This outrage has been primarily directed against the arrestees, despite a lack of evidence connecting them to the vandalism. Why has this happened? And what’s really at stake here?

Two years later, the Asheville 11 are still awaiting trial. The defendants were slated for trial on April 11th, 2010. As of right now, their trials as well as all other jury trials in Asheville have been suspended. They will not resume until a complete audit of the Asheville Police Department’s (APD)

<sup>1</sup> The “anarchist website” the police and the media have referred to is not explicitly stated, but the media at times has pointed the news service Anarchist News, which published a call-out for support and bail money for the arrestees. On the website users anonymously submit stories to be published. Most stories are reposted from other sources, and the website neither creates nor necessarily endorses the content posted on it. While the media has used this call-out to link the defendants to anarchism, the Asheville Police Department has yet to clarify what relationship the eleven have to any “anarchist websites.”



evidence room and its evidence handling procedures has been concluded. The State Bureau of Investigation has sealed, and is investigating, the APD property room due to 397 missing tablets of Oxycodone. Their trial cannot resume until the end of this audit. As of the publishing of the magazine, their trail has still not resolved.

In October of 2010, a call out was made for solidarity with the Asheville 11, the call out said,

“To counteract the demonization [of anarchists and the Asheville 11] and discourage the authorities from using the same tactics against others, we are calling for solidarity efforts supporting the eleven to take place on the first of every month.”

#### **Clockwise from**

**top:** Asheville

demo *Dec*

1<sup>st</sup>, Olympia

vandals *Apr 1<sup>st</sup>,*

Olympia broken

bank *Apr 1<sup>st</sup>.*

What follows in a brief summary of actions that took place across the US, check out the Peak website to see links to the complete statements of solidarity with the arrested:

#### **Revolutionary Solidarity with the Asheville 11:**

***San Francisco, CA (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010):***

Anarchists sabotaged eleven banks, businesses and construction sites with glue.

***Asheville, NC (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010):***

Two Banners Dropped

***Oklahoma City, OK (Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010):***

Banner Dropped reading, “Solidarity with the Asheville 11”

***Asheville, NC (Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010):***

Forty person march against gentrification in Asheville and police, in solidarity with the Asheville 11. The Demo marched to the Buncombe County Jail and then to a local park.

***Portland, OR (Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010):***

Smoke bomb set off in police club.

***Tacoma, Washington (March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011):***

Paint thrown on Wells Fargo bank.

***Seattle, Washington (March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011):***

Windows at an American Apparel broken.

***Olympia, Washington (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011):***

–All but one window was broken at a South Sound Bank, causing 12,000 dollars in damages.

–3 other banks had locks and ATM’s glued. Black paint thrown on them.

***Seattle, Washington (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011):***

Widows at Chase Bank broken and paint thrown inside.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The actions taken on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 in Asheville, North Carolina represent an interesting look at one tactic of disrupting capital on May Day. Similar to the popular tactic of flash mobs, a group descended on a gentrified neighbourhood in Asheville, breaking windows and leaving graffiti to target banks and institutions of the rich, along with businesses bringing rich customers into the neighbourhood.

The subsequent arrests and legal harassment has taken on a wealth of times and resources from a resistant community. But this community has also responded to this repression in part by advocating revolutionary solidarity with the accused. Through solidarity demonstrations and after hours vandalism, they have been able to increase the headache faced by local politicians and police trying to push forward convictions in this case.

The actions of that day, along with the national campaign of vandalism inspired by the actions of that day, demonstrate an interesting and exciting method of turning arrests and repression into inspiration for further attacks on capital. These actions leave those orchestrating the case against the Asheville 11 with a tough question: is the further damage caused worth the convictions they may get in this case?



# HURRAY FOR ANARCHY!

**MAY DAY AS CELEBRATED BY THE ANARCHISTS**

**By Strangers in a  
Tangled Wilderness &  
Eberhardt Press**

**M**ayday, to the anarchists, is a holiday of remembrance. Perhaps you've heard the communists and liberals say that it's a celebration of the eight-hour workday. I suppose it's that too. But for me, it's a holiday to remember when the State put anarchism itself on trial. In 1886, the line was drawn and the US radicals lost their

innocence; the illusion of “free speech” and free association was shattered. Let that illusion never re-form.

Mayday is our holiday. Mayday is a celebration of anarchism, of our history of defiance. It has a lot to do with labor, but Mayday has nothing to do with electoral politics, with the American flag. “Labor day” was invented and implemented to distract people from the radical history of labor.

Mayday is also, of course, the celebration of Beltane—a religious and spiritual holiday that celebrates springtime. And more recently, it’s the day of protest and action in response to the US treatment of immigrants. It’s a big enough holiday to share, and anarchists are present and important

in both of those movements as well.

Myself, on Mayday, I remember five people who were killed for being anarchists.

“The love  
of money  
is the root  
of all evil”

## TWO DAYS OF MASSACRES

In 1884, radical labor unions declared that, as of May 1st, 1886, the eight-hour workday would be enacted.

On May 3rd, 1886, un-armed striking workers of the McCormick Harvester factory in Chicago demonstrated against the scabs who stole their jobs, and the strikers were fired upon by police. At least four workers were killed and many more were wounded.

An emergency proclamation, in German and English, went throughout the city by the means of the anarchist press: “They killed

**They killed them  
to show you ‘Free  
American Citizens’  
that you must  
be satisfied with  
whatever your  
bosses condescend  
to allow you, or  
you will get killed.**

the poor wretches because they, like you, had the courage to disobey the supreme will of your bosses. They killed them to show you ‘Free American Citizens’ that you must be satisfied with whatever your bosses condescend to allow you, or you will get killed. If you are men, if you are the sons of your grand sires, who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise in your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you. To arms we call you, to arms.” An emergency rally was called for the next day, and on May 4th, 3,000 gathered at Haymarket Square in Chicago.

The anarchists Albert Parsons, August Spies, and Samuel Fielden spoke to the peaceably assembled crowd. The Mayor himself stopped by and, noting the non-violent nature of the rally, continued on his way. By the end of Fielden’s speech, two-thirds of the crowd had left and the rally was winding down. But then 180 police—led by the infamously violent Captain John Bonfield—marched into the rally and demanded the dispersal of the crowd. (This seems to still happen quite a bit.)

Someone threw a bomb into the police, killing one officer. The police opened fire and killed an unknown number of the rally’s attendants. Seven more officers were killed, most by friendly fire, but it is possible that the crowd defended itself

ILLUSTRATION: LINDSAY STARBUCK

# Let's get Medieval on greed's ass.

as well. And while most of the history of Mayday focuses exclusively on men fighting, men dying, men as heroes and villains and martyrs, it's known that the crowd there at Haymarket was composed of women and men alike, and that there were women militants as well as men.

## THE TRIAL

After the second massacre, the police went into a panic, rounding up hundreds of workers, raiding union halls, destroying houses and apartments. The State's attorney, Julius Grinnell, announced: "Make the raids first and look up the laws later!" The strikebreaking bosses donated money to the police to help with the efforts. It's come out since that the police bribed false witnesses, planted weapons, tortured and beat folk who didn't even know what socialism or anarchism were. Ten of the arrested were indicted, eight went to trial (William Seliger turned states evidence, while Rudolph Schnaubelt was never caught and lived free for the rest of his days.)

The government never pretended that any of the arrested threw the bomb. Instead, it was anarchism itself they tried, explicitly. Seven were sentenced to death, one to fifteen years. Of the seven, five refused to sign a petition to the governor for clemency, because they refused to admit guilt and because they refused to plead to the State. Of those five, four were hanged, the fifth took his life in prison.

Later, with five anarchists dead, the government was pressured to admit its wrongdoing and pardoned the three remaining anarchists. But the damage was done. Radicals all over the country, all over the world, were inspired for generations to understand that the State (the USA at the time was considered a

beacon of freedom) was inherently oppressive, that it cared not for its own feigned laws or justice.

## THE DEFENDANTS

### AUGUST SPIES (1855-1887) (HANGED)

August Spies, a German immigrant, was an upholsterer and an editor of an anarchist daily paper, *Arbeiter-Zeitung* ("Worker's Newspaper"). In court, during his final address, he spoke: "I am an Anarchist. I believe with Buckle, with Paine, Jefferson, Emerson, and Spencer, and many other great thinkers of this century, that the state of castes and classes—the state where one class dominates over and lives upon the labor of another class, and calls this order—yes; I believe that this barbaric form of social organization, with its legalized plunder and murder, is doomed to die, and make room for a free society, voluntary association, or universal brotherhood, if you like. You may pronounce the sentence upon me, honorable judge, but let the world know that in 1886 AD, in the State of Illinois eight men were sentenced to death, because they believed in a better future." And he said: "If you think that by hanging us, you can stamp out the labor movement—the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil and live in want and misery—the wage slaves—expect salvation—if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread upon a spark, but there, and there, and behind you and in front of you, and everywhere, flames will blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out." His last words, as he stood upon the gallows, were: "The day will come when our



silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today!"



**ALBERT PARSONS (1848-1887)  
(HANGED)**

Albert Parsons, American born and the son of a factory-owner but orphaned young, fought for the confederacy during the Civil War. He regretted his defense of slavery for the rest of his life, and later married a mixed-ancestry woman Lucy Parsons (a famous anarchist in her own right). He went on to become an anti-slavery republican before eventually settling in Chicago and discovering anarchism. He worked as an orator and writer for several years before the Haymarket massacre. At first, he fled Chicago to escape capture, but later turned himself in to stand in solidarity with his doomed comrades. In his last letter to his wife before he was hanged, Albert wrote: "My children—well, their father had better die in the endeavor to secure their liberty and happiness than live contented in a society which condemns nine-tenths of its children to a life of wage-slavery and poverty. Bless them; I love them unspeakably, my poor helpless little ones. Ah, wife, living or dead, we are as one. For you my affection is everlasting. For the people, humanity. I cry out again and again in the doomed victim's cell: Liberty! Justice! Equality!" On the scaffold, his last words were cut short by the hangman, and he was not permitted to speak.



**GEORGE ENGEL (1836-1887)  
(HANGED)**

Born poor in Germany and orphaned as an early teen, George Engel emigrated to America, believing he would soon be in the land of the free, and worked as a shoemaker before opening a toyshop. Fifty years old at the time of his arrest, George (who was an active socialist and anarchist) wasn't even present at the Haymarket rally; he was at home playing cards. After being sentenced to

die, Engel wrote the governor refusing clemency. In the letter he wrote: "I took part in politics with the earnestness of a good citizen; but I was soon to find that the teachings of a 'free ballot box' are a myth and that I had again been duped. I came to the opinion that as long as workingmen are economically enslaved they cannot be politically free. It became clear to me that the working classes would never bring about a form of society guaranteeing work, bread, and a happy life by means of the ballot." He warned the governor that by making open agitation for anarchism impossible, anarchists would turn towards bombs, that "no power on earth can rob the workingman of his knowledge of how to make bombs." As the noose went about his neck, George Engel the toymaker cried out simply: "Hurrah for Anarchy!" in German.

**ADOLPH FISCHER (1858-1887)  
(HANGED)**



Adolph Fischer, a German immigrant and second-generation socialist, was a typographer and compositor who worked on the anarchist newspaper

Arbeiter-Zeitung

in Chicago. He was sentenced to die by hanging. During his last testimony in court, he said: "If I am to die on account of being an Anarchist, on account of my love for liberty, fraternity and equality, then I will not remonstrate. If death is the penalty for our love of the freedom of the human race, then I say openly I have forfeited my life; but a murderer I am not ... if the ruling class thinks that by hanging us, hanging a few Anarchists, they can crush out Anarchy, they will be badly mistaken, because the Anarchist loves his principles more than his life.



An Anarchist is always ready to die for his principles; but in this case I have been charged with murder, and I am not a murderer. You will find it impossible to kill a principle, although you may take the life of men who confess these principles. The more the believers in just causes are persecuted, the quicker will their ideas be realized. For instance, in rendering such an unjust and barbarous verdict, the twelve ‘honorable men’ in the jury-box have done more for the furtherance of Anarchism than the convicted could have accomplished in a generation. This verdict is a death-blow against free speech, free press, and free thought in this country, and the people will be conscious of it, too.” As he was hanged, he said: “Hurrah for Anarchy! This is the happiest moment of my life!”

**LOUIS LINGG (1864-1887)  
(SUICIDE)**



A German immigrant and a carpenter, Louis Lingg was only twenty two when he was arrested and twenty three when he died in his jail cell. Louis was not easy to arrest: when they came for him,

he drew a gun and struggled against the police. In court, he was unrepentant, admitting that he did indeed make bombs, although he had nothing to do with the Haymarket bombing.

He was sentenced to die. As part of his final statement to the court, he said: “Anarchy means no domination or authority of one man over another, yet you call that ‘disorder.’ A system which advocates no such ‘order’ as shall require the services of rogues and thieves [the police and courts] to defend it you call ‘disorder.’” He mocked the hypocrisy and perjury and irony of the court openly, and he said: “if you cannonade

us, we shall dynamite you. You laugh! Perhaps you think, ‘you’ll throw no more bombs’; but let me assure you I die happy on the gallows, so confident am I that the hundreds and thousands to whom I have spoken will remember my words; and when you shall have hanged us, then—mark my words—they will do the bombthrowing! In this hope do I say to you: I despise you. I despise your order, your laws, your force-propped authority. Hang me for it!” Later, while awaiting his death, he somehow acquired a large number of bombs, most likely for the purpose of escape for himself and the other anarchists, but these were confiscated. He was thrown into solitary, but had smuggled enough explosive to take his own life, denying the State their chance to hang him.

**SAMUEL FIELDEN (1847-1922)  
(PARDONED)**

Samuel Fielden, an English immigrant and a self-employed teamster, was shot in the knee by police during the Haymarket Massacre. The next day he was arrested and charged with conspiracy. Although he was sentenced to die, he chose to write to the governor, requesting clemency, which was granted, and he served six years of his life sentence before eventually being pardoned by the new governor. During his address to the court, he recited a poem, “Revolution” by the German poet Freilegrath. He said that every intelligent German in the world had a copy of that poem on their shelf, and that: “It is not generally considered a crime among intellectual people to be a Revolutionist, but it may be made a crime if the Revolutionist happens to be poor.” He spoke well and at great length, also mentioning that: “If my life is to be taken for advocating the principles of Socialism and Anarchy, as I have understood them and honestly believe them to be in the interests of humanity, I say to you that I gladly give it up; and the price is very small for the result that is gained.” After





**MAY DAY**

**HOLIDAY FOR THE 99%**

being released from prison, he lived quietly on a ranch with his wife for the rest of his years.

**MICHAEL SCHWAB (1853-1898)  
(PARDONED)**



Michael Schwab, a German immigrant and bookbinder, helped edit *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Arrested and sentenced to death, he spoke his final address: “We contend for communism and

Anarchy—why? If we had kept silent, stones would have cried out. Murder was committed day by day. Children were slain, women worked to death, men killed inch by inch, and these crimes are never punished by law. The great principle underlying the present system is unpaid labor. Those who amass fortunes, build palaces, and live in luxury, are doing that by virtue of unpaid labor. Being directly or indirectly the possessors of land and machinery, they dictate their terms to the workingman. He is compelled to sell his labor cheap, or to starve. The price paid him is always far below the real value. He acts under compulsion, and they call it a free contract. This infernal state of affairs keeps him poor and ignorant; an easy prey for exploitation.” And that: “It is entirely wrong to use the word Anarchy as synonymous with violence. Violence is one thing and Anarchy another. In the present state of society violence is used on all sides, and therefore we advocated the use of violence against violence, but against violence only, as a necessary means of defense.” Schwab wrote to the governor and his sentence was commuted to life in prison. Six years later, a new governor stepped in and pardoned him. Schwab opened a shoestore where he sold socialist books alongside the other wares, but his health

never recovered from his six years in jail and he died of respiratory failure.

**OSCAR NEEBE (1850-1916)  
(PARDONED)**

Oscar Neebe, a German immigrant and yeast-peddler, was also the office manager of the anarchist newspaper *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. He was not present at the Haymarket rally, nor did he even hear of it until the next day, when the editors of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* were arrested. He said: “As long as I stand I shall publish that paper,” and published it for several days before being arrested himself. Held on the flimsiest evidence of any of the defendants, he was sentenced to fifteen years. In his final address to the court, he declared: “Hang me, too; for I think it is more honorable to die suddenly than to be killed by inches. I have a family and children; and if they know their father is dead, they will bury him. They can go to the grave, and kneel down by the side of it; but they can’t go to the penitentiary and see their father, who was convicted for a crime that he hasn’t had anything to do with. That is all I have got to say. Your honor, I am sorry I am not to be hung with the rest of the men.” He was not hanged, and served six years before being pardoned by the new governor. After he was released he continued to agitate, and was instrumental in forming the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), that infamous and lovely anarchist union.

**“It is entirely wrong to use the word Anarchy as synonymous with violence”**



zines made above the 45th parallel

# BURN PILE

This is an open call for zines to be reviewed. Burn Pile is a zine that only reviews zines made by folks up here, in Canada. The 45th parallel is the line roughly that follows the US and Canadian border. Send Burn Pile your zines!

Please send the completed form on the back of this flyer attached to each zine you are sending for review. Copy the form if you are sending more than one zine in for review.  
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Issue #/date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail/Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Price:\$\_\_\_\_\_ size: \_\_\_\_\_ page count:\_\_\_\_\_

Trades: yes / no / please contact

Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## CALLOUT FOR SUBMISSIONS

### FOR A ZINE OF FIRST-HAND ABORTION STORIES

This will be a zine highlighting first-hand experiences of people who have ended pregnancies. Topics could include accessing and undergoing a medical abortion, using herbs, and aftercare and healing, and sexuality before, during and after pregnancy, or anything you want to write about.

The purpose of this project is to highlight systematic regulation of female-assigned bodies (and how that regulation impacts indigenous, queer and disabled bodies and bodies of colour); to normalize and give visibility to our experiences of abortion; and to celebrate our resiliency and resistance.

Submissions from any geographical location are encouraged, but since this zine will be distributed primarily in Southern Ontario, stories about experiences with local abortion service providers would be especially helpful. Submissions are welcome to be anonymous, and should be anywhere from 500-1500 words.

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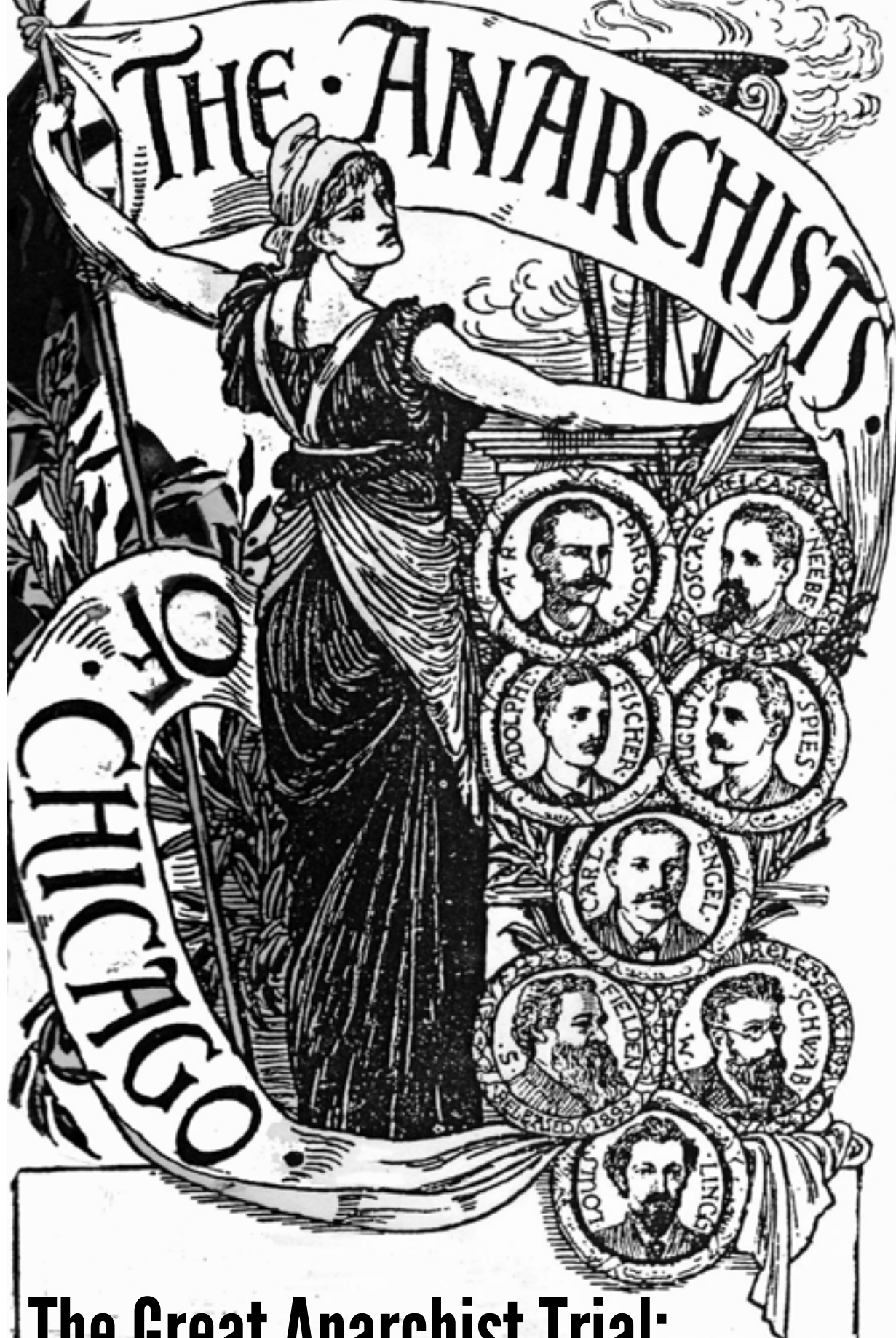
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# The Great Anarchist Trial:

By: August Spies & Albert R. Parsons

# The Haymarket Speeches As Delivered On The Evening Of The Throwing Of The Bomb, At Haymarket Square, Chicago, May 4, 1886

## NOTE

The Chicago Times of August 10<sup>th</sup> contained the following statements, among others, in regard to the great trial:

“The climax in the Anarchist trial was reached yesterday. Schwab, Spies and Parsons told their respective stories to the jury from the witness-chair, to a spell-bound audience of spectators, an amazed jury, and a surprised judge. \* \* \* Parsons was composed and eloquent. \* \* \* His brother, General W. H. Parsons, sat with eyes fixed upon him during the time he was upon the stand. As soon as Mr. August Spies retired Mr. Parsons took the stand, and in a quiet, deferential tone answered the questions put to him in a firm voice, not appearing to be in the least unnerved by his peculiar position. At length he was asked to give the substance of his Haymarket - speech, and he did so, and if the jury, the court, and the audience have been entertained since the trial began, they were entertained by the chief agitator of the Chicago Anarchists. He pulled out of his pocket a bundle of notes, and began at the jury in tones which betokened that the speaker was primed for the finest speech of his life. Luckily for him the witness-chair was a swinging one. He held his notes in his left hand, and, together with the swaying of his body, gesticulated with his right hand. From low, measured tones he went from eloquence to oratory, and from oratory to logic, and from logic to argument.”

## The Riot at McCormick's

### THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY AUGUST SPIES' AT THE HAYMARKET, MAY 4, ON THE OCCASION OF THE BOMB-THROWING

**F**RIENDS-The speakers of the evening not having arrived, I shall entertain you a-few minutes. I am told that a number of patrol wagons, carrying policemen, were sent to Desplaines street station, and I understand that the militia have been called under arms. There seems to prevail the opinion in certain quarters that this meeting has been called for the purpose of inaugurating a riot, hence these warlike preparations on the part of so-called “Law and Order.” However, let me tell you at the beginning that this

meeting has not been called for any such purpose. The object of this meeting is to explain the general situation of the Eight-Hour Movement, and to throw light upon various incidents in connection with it.

For more than twenty years have the wage workers of this country begged and prayed their masters, the factory lords, to reduce their burdens. It has been in vain. They have pointed out the fact that over a million of willing and strong hands were in a state of enforced idleness and starvation, that to help them to obtain employment it would not only be advisable, nay, it was necessary to reduce the hours of daily toil of those who were fortunate enough in having found a buyer for their

‘muscles, their bones, and their brain. The masters of this earth have treated them with contempt, have condemned them to vagabondage whenever they insisted. The legislatures have been called upon, one petition has succeeded the other, but with no avail.

At last the condition of the disinherited producers has become unbearable. Seeing that neither “boss” nor law would concede anything to them, they have organized for the purpose of helping themselves -a wise and prudent resolution.

All over the land we behold vast armies of producers, no longer begging, but demanding that eight hours shall henceforth constitute a normal working day. And what say the extortionists to this? They demand their pound of flesh, like Shylock. They will not yield one iota. They have grown rich and powerful on your labour. They amass stupendous fortunes, while you, who bring them into existence, are suffering from want. In answer to your pleadings they ask for the bodies of your little children, to utilize them in their gold mints, to make dollars out of them! Look at the slaves of McCormick! When they tried to remonstrate with their master he simply called upon “the protectors of these free and glorious institutions” – the police – to silence them. And they did silence them.

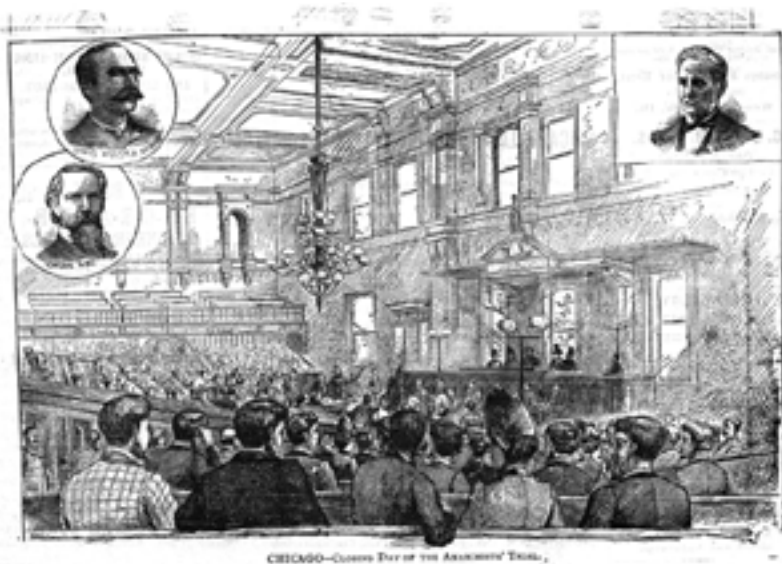
You have no doubt heard of the killing and wounding of a number of your brothers at McCormick’s, yesterday. Mr. McCormick told a Times reporter that Spies was responsible for that massacre committed by the most noble Chicago police. I reply to this that McCormick is, an infamous liar. (Cries of “Hang him.”) No, make no idle threats. There will be a time, and we are rapidly approaching it, when such men as McCormick will be hanged; there will be a time when monsters who destroy the lives and happiness of the citizens (for their own aggrandizement) will be dealt with like wild beasts. But that time has not yet come. When it has

come you will no longer make threats, but you will go and “do it.”

The capitalistic press, like the “respectable gentleman” McCormick, howls that the anarchists are responsible for the deeds of violence now committed all over this country. If that were true one would have to conclude that the country was full of anarchists, yet the same press informs us that the anarchists are very few in number. Were the “unlawful” acts in the Southwestern strike committed by anarchists? No, they were committed by Knights of labour, men who never fail to declare, whenever there is an opportunity, that they are law and order abiding citizens. The attack upon McCormick’s yesterday – Was it made by anarchists? Let us see. I had been invited by the Central labour Union to address a meeting of lumber yard labourers, on the Black road. I went out there yesterday at the appointed time, about three o’clock in the afternoon. There were at least 10,000 persons assembled. When I was introduced to address them a few Poles or Bohemians in the crowd cried out: “He’s a socialist.” These cries were followed by a general commotion and derision – “We want no socialist; down with him.” These and other exclamations I was treated to. Of course, I spoke anyway; the crowd became calm and quiet and fifteen minutes later, elected me unanimously a delegate to see their bosses. Nevertheless, you can see that these people are not socialists or anarchists, but “good, honest,

Illustration of the rally in Haymarket Square before a bomb was thrown at the police. Four workers were killed by the police in the ensuing gun battle.





The Final Day of the Haymarket Trial in Chicago.

law-abiding church-going Christians and citizens.” Such were the persons who left the meeting, as I afterwards learned, to “make the scabs at McCormick’s quit work.” In my speech I never mentioned McCormick. Now you may judge for yourselves whether the anarchists were responsible for the bloodshed yesterday or not.

Who is responsible for these many “lawless” acts, you ask me? I have told you that they are generally committed by the most lawful and Christian citizens — in other words, the people are by necessity driven to violence, they can’t carry the burden heaped upon them any longer. They try to cast it off, and in so doing break the laws. The law says they must not cast it off, for such an act would alter, yea, revolutionize the existing order of society! These acts of violence are the natural outgrowth of the present industrial system, and everyone is responsible for them who supports and upholds that system.

What does it mean when the police of this city, on this evening, rattle along in their patrol wagons?

What does it mean when the militia stands warlike and ready for bloody work at our armories?

What are the gatling guns and cannons for?

Is this military display of barbarism arranged for your entertainment?

Ail these preparations, my friends, ARE made in your behalf!!

Your masters have perceived your discontent.

They do not like discontented slaves.

They want to make you contented at all hazards, and if you are stubborn they will force or kill you.

Look at the killing of your brothers at McCormick’s yesterday. What did they do? The police tell you that they were a most dangerous crowd, armed to their teeth. The fact is, they, like ignorant children, indulged in the harmless sport of bombarding McCormick’s slaughterhouse with stones. They paid the penalty of this folly with their blood.

The lesson I draw from this occurrence is, that working men must arm themselves for defense, so that they may be able to cope with the government hirelings of their masters.

I see Mr. Parsons has arrived. He is a much abler speaker in your tongue than I am, therefore I will conclude by introducing him.



PICTURED AUGUST SPIES



The speech of Mr. Parsons, which follows, was re-delivered, on examination before the Court, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 1886.

## Rights and Wrongs of labour.

CAPTAIN BLACK: Now, Mr. Parsons, going back to the meeting, retracing our steps for a moment — will you tell us, please, what was the substance of your speech that night, as fully as you can remember?”

### THE SPEECH.

“I have taken some notes of reference since then to refresh my memory. I recollect distinctly of mentioning all of these points, but could not recall them, seriatim unless I put them on paper, and that is the reason I have done so.

“When I was introduced I looked at the crowd and observed that it was quite a large crowd. I am familiar with public speaking and with crowds, and I should estimate there were three thousand men present, and I consider myself a judge of such matters. The street was packed from sidewalk to sidewalk, north and south of the wagon but especially south of the wagon, for a considerable distance. I faced the south. I first called the attention of those present to the

the idle, and thereby bring comfort and change to the homes of the destitute and relieving the unrelieved and the toil of those who worked not alone ten hours,

BUT TWELVE, FOURTEEN AND SIXTEEN HOURS A DAY.

I said that the eight-hour movement was in the interests of civilization of prosperity, of the public welfare, and that it was demanded by every interest in the community, and that I was glad to see them assemble on that occasion to give their voice in favour of the adoption of the eight-hour workday. I then referred again to the general condition of labour throughout the country. I spoke of my recent travels through the States of Pennsylvania and Ohio where I had met and addressed thousands and thousands of workingmen. I told of the Tuscarora Valley and of the Hocking Valley and of the Monongahela Valley among the miners of this country, where their

WAGES AVERAGED TWENTY-FOUR AND A HALF CENTS A DAY

### EVIDENCE OF DISCONTENT AMONG THE WORKING CLASSES.

not alone of Chicago, not alone of the United States, but of the civilized world, and I asked the question, if these evidences of disconnected as could be seen in strikes and lockouts and boycotts, were not indications that there was something radically wrong in the existing order things in our social affairs. I then alluded to the eight-hour movement and spoke of it as a movement designed to give steady employment to the employed, work to

I showed, of course, these were not wages they received while at work, but that the difficulty was they did not get the day's work, and consequently they had to sum up the totals and divide it. Throughout the year it amounted to twenty-four and a half cents a day. I asked if this was not a condition of affairs calculated to arouse the discontent of the people, and to make them clamour for redress and relief. I pointed to the fact that in the city of Pittsburg a report was made by, I think, the Superintendent of Police of that city, stating that at the Bethel

Home, a charitable institution in that city, from January 1st, 1884, to January 1st, 1885, there were 26,374 destitute men — tramps — American sovereigns — who had applied for a night's lodging and a morsel of food at one establishment alone in the city of Pittsburg. I referred, of course, to many other places and similar things, showing the general condition of labour in the country. I then spoke of the eight-hour movement — that it was designed to bring relief to these men and to the country. I thought surely there was nothing in it to excite such hostility on the part of employers and on the part of monopoly and corporations against it, as was, witnessed in different parts of the country. I referred to the refusal of the corporations and monopolists to grant and concede this modest request of the working class, and their attempts to defeat it. I then referred to the fact that in the face of all these causes producing these effects, the monopolistic newspapers, in the interests of corporations, blamed such men as I — blamed the so-called agitators, blamed the workingmen — for these evidences or discontent, this turmoil and confusion, and so-called disorder. I called the attention of the crowd specifically to that fact — that we were being blamed for this thing, when, on the contrary, it was evident to any fair-minded man that we were simply calling the attention of the people to this condition of things and seeking a redress for it. I impressed

that upon the crowd specifically, and I remember that in response to that several gentlemen spoke up loudly and said: 'Well, we need a good many just such men as you to right these wrongs and to arouse the people.' I spoke of the

#### COMPULSORY IDLENESS AND STARVATION WAGES

and how these things drove the, workingmen to desperation — drove them to commit acts for which they ought not to be held responsible that they were the creatures of circumstances, and that this condition of things was the fault, not of the workingmen, but of those who claimed the right to control and regulate the rights of the workingmen I pointed out the fact that monopoly, in its course in grinding down labour in this country and in refusing to concede anything to it — refusing to make any concessions what so ever — that in persisting in course it was

#### CREATING REVOLUTIONISTS

and if there was a single revolutionist in America, monopoly and corporations were directly responsible for their existence. I specifically called attention to this fact, in order to defend myself from the charge constantly being made through the mouthpiece of monopoly — the capitalistic press. I called attention in this connection to the Chicago Times and other newspapers. I called the attention of the working people that night to the strike of 1877, when the Chicago Times declared that hand-grenades ought to be thrown among the striking sailors who were then upon a strike on the river wharves in this city, in order to teach them a lesson, and that other strikers might be warn by their fate. I said that the Chicago Times was the first dynamiter in America and as the mouthpiece of monopoly and corporations it was the first to advocate the killing of people when they protested against wrong and oppression. I spoke

Illustration: Four of the Haymarket Martyr's being lead to their execution.



of the Chicago Tribune, which that day advocated that when bread was given to the poor strychnine should be placed on it. I also called attention to Frank Leslie's Illustrated Paper, which declared in an editorial that the American toiler must be driven to his task either by the slave-driver's lash or the immediate prospect of want. I spoke of the New York Herald, and saying that lead should be given to any tramp who should come around. Whenever a workingman, thrown out of employment and forced to wander from place to place in search of work, away from family and home, asked for a crust of bread, the New York Herald advised them to whom he applied to fill him with lead instead of bread. I called attention to what Tom Scott, the railway monopolist, said during the strike of 1877, 'Give them the rifle diet, and see how they like our kind of bread.' I referred to Jay Gould, when he said we would have a monarchy in this country, and to a similar statement in the Indianapolis Journal. Then I referred to how monopoly was putting these threats into practice. They not only used these threats, but put them into practice, and I cited East St. Louis, where Jay Gould called for men and paid them five dollars a day for firing upon harmless, innocent, unarmed workingmen, killing nine of them and one woman in cold-blooded murder. I referred to the Saginaw valley, where militia was used to put down strikes. I referred to Lemont, Ill., where defenceless and innocent citizens and their town were invaded by militia of the state of Illinois, and without any pretext men, women and children were fired upon and slaughtered in cold blood. I referred to the McCormick strike on the previous day; and denounced action of the police on that occasion as an outrage. I asked workingmen if these were not facts, and if monopolies and corporations were not responsible for them, and were they not driving people into this condition of things. And then I used some word some phrase in connection with the use of the

military and the police and the Pinkerton thugs to shoot down workingmen, to drive them back into submission and starvation wages. I then referred to the Chicago Mail of Monday, to which my attention had been called on Tuesday afternoon. In an editorial it asserted Parsons and Spies incited the trouble at McCormick's factory the day before, and ought to be lynched and driven out of the city. But the truth is, I was at Cincinnati at that time. I called attention to the fact that the newspapers were wickedly exciting the people against the workingmen. I denied the newspaper charge that we were sneaks and cowards, and defied them to run us out of the city. I pointed to the fact that the

#### CAPITALISTIC PRESS

were the subsidized agents and organs of monopoly, and that held stocks and bonds in corporations and railroads, and that no could be elected an alderman of this city unless he had the sanction of some one of the corporations and monopolies of this city. Then I said, 'I am not here, fellow-workmen, for the purpose of inciting anybody, but to tell the truth, and to state the facts as they actually exist, though it should cost me my life doing so. I then referred to the Cincinnati demonstration, at which I was present the Sunday previous. I said that the organizations of workingmen in that city — the trades unions and other organizations — had a grand street parade and picnic. They sent for me to go down there and address them. It was an eight-hour demonstration. I attended on that occasion and spoke to them. I referred to the fact that they turned out in thousands and that they marched with Winchester rifles, two or three companies of them. I supposed there were about two hundred men at the head of the column, the Cincinnati Rifle Union. I said that at the head of the procession they bore the red flag —

THE RED FLAG OF LIBERTY,  
FRATERNITY, EQUALITY FOR LABOUR,

pointed out that every other flag in the world repudiated the workingman, outlawed the workingman, and that he had no shield and no flag but the red one. I then referred to our country and to men saying that this was a movement of foreigners and so on in this country. I pointed out the fact that the desire for right and the thirst for liberty and for justice was not a foreign affair at all. It was one which concerned Americans as much as foreigners, and that patriotism was a humbug in this connection; that it was used to separate the people, to divide them and antagonize them against each other; that the Irish were separated, and their national feeling was kept alive as against an Englishman, in order that the exploiters and depredators upon them might the more easily make them their victims and use them as their tools. I referred in that connection then to land monopoly, and I showed how the farms of this country were being driven into land tenures like that of Europe, and called attention to an article which appeared in the North American Review last December which I think was by an eminent statistician of this country, in which it is stated that in the little State of Connecticut alone there was three hundred and fifty million dollars of mortgages were held upon farms, west of the Alleghenies by capitalists living in the little state of Connecticut, demonstrating that Americans need not go abroad to find the evils of land monopoly. I stated that over fifty per cent, perhaps two-thirds, of the farms in the state of Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan were under mortgage, and that landlordism was making it impossible for these men to pay for these farms, and that they were breaking them up, forcing them to become tenants, and instituting the European system in this country. I said that I did not regard that as a question of patriotism, nor a foreign question,

but an American question concerning Americans. I referred to the banking monopoly of the country by which a few men are empowered to make money scarce in order that they may control the markets, run corners on the medium of exchange, and produce a panic in the country by making money scarce. They made the price of articles dear, and threw labour out of employment, and brought on bankruptcy. I said the monopoly owned labour and employed its armed hirelings to subject the people. In the light of these facts, and of your inalienable right to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, it behooves you, as you love your wives and children, and if you would not see them perish of want and hunger, yourselves killed or cut down like dogs in the streets — Americans in the interest of your liberty and independence,

ARM! ARM YOURSELVES!

A voice then said to me, 'We are ready now'. I did not understand what the gentleman said, but I made that reply, as has been testified to by many here. I called attention to the fact that the Constitution of the United States gave to the workingmen the right to keep and bear arms, but monopoly was seeking to deprive them of that right. I called attention to the fact that the Constitution of the United States gave us the right of free speech, of free press and of unmolested assembly, but that corporations and monopoly by its paid decisions in the courts, had trampled these rights under foot, or were attempting to do so. I called attention, that the government of the United States was in the hands of the money power, and that from this fact, the sway of this money power, that it was almost impossible for the poor man to get justice in a court of law; that

LAW WAS FOR SALE,



just like bread — if you didn't have the money you couldn't get the bread. If you didn't have the money you couldn't get justice; that justice was almost beyond the reach of the poor, and that the poor were made poor and kept poor by the grinding processes of corporations and monopolies. I then called attention to socialism, and explained what it was. I told them Webster's definition of it; that it meant a more equitable arrangement of society, a more just and equitable arrangement of social affairs; that there was nothing in the word or in the purposes of socialism for anyone to become alarmed at. On the contrary it should be hailed with delight by all, as it was designed to make all happy and prosperous. I then spoke in this connection of the wage system of industry. I showed that under the wage system of industry — that the wage system was a despotism, inherently and necessarily so, because under it the wage worker is forced and compelled to work on such conditions and such terms as the employer of labour may see fit to dictate to him. This I defined to be slavery, hence I said they were wage slaves, and the wage system was what socialism proposed to displace. I then showed the power that the wage system gave to the employing class by the lock-out, by blacklist, and by discharge; that I had myself been black-listed by employers because I exercised my right as an American of free speech; because I saw fit to be a member of a labour organization, I had been deprived repeatedly of my bread by my employer for that reason. I then called attention to the United States census for 1880, and I showed that the returns made there statistically gotten up by a Republican administration, by the administration of the Republican party, showed that eighty five cents from every dollar produced on the average went to the profit taking classes, and that fifteen cents on the average was the sum received by the producing class for having produced the whole dollar. I said that this was wrong,

and that in the face of such a condition of things we could expect nothing else but poverty and destitution, but want and misery. And I showed how under this arrangement that the workingmen of the United States were really doing

#### TEN HOURS WORK FOR TWO HOURS PAY;

and that it was said by the employers, "Well, you men want to work only eight hours — "do you mean to say that we must pay you ten hours pay for "eight hours work." Let us answer to these men and say and prove to them by the statistics of the United States census that we are not receiving now but two hours pay for ten hours work, that is what the wages of the country on the average represents. I referred to this condition of things. I spoke of corporations crowding the workingmen to the wall, and summed it up in some such words as these. 'Now, for years past the Associated Press manipulated by Jay Gould and his infamous minions has been

#### SOWING THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION."

These seeds are summarized about as follows:

- To deprive labour of the ballot.
- Second, to substitute a Monarchy for a Republic.
- To rob labour and then make poverty a crime.
- To deprive small farmers of their land, and then convert them into serfs to serve huge landlordism.
- To teach labour that bread and water were all they needed.
- To throw bombs into crowds of workingmen who refused to labour for starvation wages.
- To take the ballot by force of arms from the majority if it was against the interests of corporation and capital.

- To put strychnine upon the bread of the poor.
- To hang labouring men to a lamp post by a mob in the absence of testimony to convict them.
- To drive the people, the poor working classes into open mutiny against the laws in order to secure their punishment and conviction afterwards for it.

These threats and these diabolical teachings I said had been openly and boldly spoken by the great conspiracy, the solid Associated Press, and the monopolies of this country for years against the lives and liberties of the poor workingmen of America who are as sensitive to the wrongs imposed upon them, as though they themselves possessed millions. I said that this was the seed from which had sprung the labour movement, and it was as natural as cause and effect. [The working men present appeared to be very much interested. I never saw a more quiet, orderly, interested gathering of men — and I have spoken to a great many in my life — that was present on that occasion.] I called their attention to the fact that

#### LABOUR PAID FOR EVERYTHING

paid all the expenses of the Government, of the police, of the army, of the Judges, of the Congressmen, of the Legislators, of everything — labour paid it all. That I as a tenant — and I used my own case as an illustration — says I, “Now, the landlord “claims that he pays the taxes. What are the taxes? When “I pay him my rent I in fact pay the taxes. He claims that “he makes the repairs on the house and paints it up and all “those things. He doesn’t do anything of the kind. He is “simply my agent, and looks after these things, and I as his “tenant pay for it all. And so it is with all tenants.” Then I said that labour bears all the burdens, but derives none of the benefits of our present civilization. I referred to the fact that it was through

these methods that the working people who produced all the wealth, were made poor and kept poor, and being poor they were ignorant, and that our school teachers had yet to learn the fact that the need of the people was more material comforts before it would become possible for them to be amenable to the influence of education; that ignorance was the result of poverty; that intemperance was produced by poverty, and for every man that was poor because he drank, I could show you twenty men who drank because they were poor. I said that this poverty, this discord, this commotion in the civilized world was the cause of disease, the cramming of people away into hovels and dens unfit for animals to live in was the cause of the death of the young, of old age coming upon the middle age; that it was the cause of crime; that poverty was at the root and at the bottom of war, of discord and of strife; and that this poverty was an

#### ARTIFICIAL AND UNNATURAL POVERTY

which socialism proposed to remedy. I was at this time of course as you understand making a speech for socialism. I was talking now as a socialist. I then spoke as a Trades Unionist. I am a member of my union and of the Knights of labour. I said that these organizations differed somewhat with the socialists in that they hoped to receive and obtain redress within the present system, but that I did not believe that was possible; that the study of social affairs, of historical development, had taught me that the system itself was at fault, and that as long as the cause remained, the effect would be felt; but that every Trade Union, every assembly of the Knights of labour, every organization of workingmen had for its ultimate aim, let its course be what it might, the emancipation of labour from economic dependence; and whether they saw it or not, events and the development

of this existing system, the wage system, its growth would force and of necessity would drive these men into socialism as the only saviour, the only means by which they could live; that they could exist in the end in no other way. I then said if I remember rightly that strikes were an attempt to right these wrongs on the part of Unions and the Knights of labour; that I did not believe in strikes — I didn't believe in them. I didn't believe that redress could be had by that method; that the power was in the hands of the employer to refuse; that if the men were on a strike, why the employer could meet the strike with a lock-out; could keep them out until they were so hungry that they would through their destitution be compelled to return and accept the terms of their employer. Therefore strikes must of necessity fail as a general thing. I then called attention to the scabs, and said that the Unionist made war upon the scabs. Says I, "Here is a distinction between socialism and trades Unions. The Unionist fights the scab. What is a scab? A man as a usual thing that has been out of employment, who is destitute and whose necessities drive him to go to work in some man's place who has employment, and of course he can only get the employment because he will take the work for less than the man who is employed is working for. He is at once denounced as scab by the Unionists, and war is made on him." Says I, "Gentlemen, socialism don't do this thing. They regard these man as the victims of a false system, and to be pitied. These scabs I might say could be compared to the fleas on the dog. The Unionist wants to kill the fleas, but the socialists would kill the dog, and that the dog is the wage system of wage slavery." I then pointed to the ballot — how we were

#### SWINDLED AT THE BALLOT BOX

defrauded and cheated; how we were bulldozed, intimidated bribed and corrupted — yes, corrupted by the very

money that had been stolen from us. Men would come to us then afterwards when we were poor, and they would give to us bread money if we would vote their ticket, and that we often did it through necessity; and in this way through these intimidations, through bribery and corruption that the workingmen had but little to expect from the ballot. I then pointed out the fact that we had petitioned or had passed resolutions, and had done everything in our power to redress, but there had been no relief, and no response in fact. There was a rebuff upon every occasion. I then said to them, "Gentlemen,

#### SOCIALISM MEANS THE FREE ASSOCIATION OF THE PEOPLE

for the "purposes of production and consumption; in other words, "universal co-operation. This is the sum total of socialism, "and the solution of the present difficulties between capital and labour." I then said that monopoly and corporations had formed a gigantic conspiracy against the poor classes, the working classes. I then called upon them to unite, to organize, to make every endeavour to obtain eight hours, that the eight hour movement meant a peaceful solution of the labour trouble; that if the employers of this country and all other countries would concede this demand, it meant peace, and if they refused this demand, it meant war, not by the working classes, not by labourers, but by monopolists and corporations upon the lives and upon the liberties and upon the happiness of the working classes. The Government I said in the hands of monopoly and corporation deprives the labourer of the labour product, of their right to live, and they are driving labour into open revolt. They are forcing the people to defend themselves, to protect and maintain their right to self-preservation; that the monopoly conspiracy originated in the great railroad strike of 1877; that they had since that time proposed to use force, and they have



used force. Vanderbilt said, “the public be damned.” The New York World and other papers said — the New York World specifically I called attention to, said that the American workingman must make up his mind to be contented with the wages he received, and not expect to receive any more wages than his European brother, and be contented with the station in life to which it has pleased God to call him. I called attention to that. I then appealed to them to defend themselves, their rights, their liberties, to combine, to unite, for in union there was strength.

That, gentlemen, was about the substance of my hour’s speech at the Haymarket.

Capt. Black: When you were referring in your speech to Jay Gould or to the Southwestern system, do you remember any interruption from the crowd, or any response connected with the name of Gould?

Answer. — Yes. I omitted that. Someone said “Hang him.” My response to that was, that this was not a conflict between

individuals, but for a change of system, and that Socialism designed to remove the causes which produced the pauper and the millionaire, it did not aim at the life of individuals.

*Originally Published by the Chicago labour press association*



PICTURED ALBERT PARSON

*A. R. Parsons*

# MAY DAY

5.01.2012

WHO  
is profitting off  
your survival ?

WE  
dont need  
to prop  
up banks

WE  
wont work  
for someone  
elses profit

# STRIKE

STRIKEEVERYWHERE.NET



# Barcelona :

## A Combative May Day Regained

**M**ay Day 2011 comes on the heels of two general strikes (29S, in September, called for by all the unions, and 27G, in January, called only by the anarcho-syndicalist and radical independent unions). These strikes saw the creation of over half a dozen neighbourhood assemblies and a periodic coordination between them, as well as other groups organizing at a city wide level. The confrontational barricades and pickets of the minoritarian<sup>1</sup> unions (CNT and CGT) were vindicated, as were the insurrectionary anarchists' tactics of attack and idea of an uncontrolled generalization of the struggle.

The CNT in particular regained credibility, as the role of the official unions in approving the Labor Reform became undeniable (the CNT, or rather the various CNT splinter groups, are the only labor union that rejected the Moncloa Pact<sup>2</sup> that turned unions into the political parties of the workplace).

An activist branch of this multicephalous<sup>3</sup>, undefinable movement won a great deal of credibility by occupying a state bank building in the centre of the city just before the September strike, playing a key role in the events to unfold, and signalling the presence of a political current reminiscent of the anti-globalization movement. In this chronicler's opinion, they lost most of their credibility in the second strike by attempting to repeat the exact same occupation action in a different location

and being quickly squashed by the police, against whom they discouraged any physical resistance. Subsequently, this current did not make themselves felt on May Day, although they do continue to have a strong presence in the neighbourhood assemblies.

In the streets, anarchists mixed with radical Catalan independentistas<sup>4</sup> (who, dubious politics aside, proved themselves in battles with the cops) and a whole mix of people generally not involved in either politics or social struggles. In the bigger September strike as much as in the smaller January non-strike, comrades took the initiative, energized themselves, and learned what works and what doesn't on a citywide scale.

The black bloc, or those operating within a framework of conflictual struggle, thrived in this environment. Because they had never adopted a politics of waiting for the right moment, but rather developed their attack against the State come rain or shine, they could draw on a much deeper reserve of experience and confidence, making themselves indispensable to the syndicalists and independentistas who had newly found a need to be disruptive. Thus, they could continue to be critical of their political peers without burning bridges or destroying the possibility of joint action in pluralistic<sup>5</sup> spaces of social struggle. They only won recourse to this wider and more chaotic field of action by putting solidarity above disdain, a marked change from the days of squatter isolation from broader social struggles.

**1** Minoritarianism refers to a process in which a minority segment of a population has a certain degree of clout or control in decision making.

**2** The Moncloa Pact was signed in 1978 during the first parliamentary elections following the dictatorship of the Francisco Franco regime. The Moncloa Pact was an agreement amongst politicians, political parties, and trade unions to plan how to operate the economy during the transition.

**3** Multicephalous or Multi-Cephalus, cephalus is greek for head. Multicephalous in this case is referring to the many heads of the movement.

**4** Catalonia is a region of Colonized northeast Spain bordering on France and the Mediterranean Sea. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was a center of socialist and anarchist activity. Catalan separatists established an autonomous republic (1932-1938) that opposed Francisco Franco's loyalist forces during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). today, Catalan independentistas struggle to defend Catalan culture, land and autonomy from the Spanish state.

**5** plu-ral-is-tic adj Having multiple aspects or parts.



Photo:  
Demonstrator  
pushes back the  
police during  
May Day Riot.

In the month leading up to May Day, all these different currents carried out actions at an increasing pace. The neighbourhood assemblies mobilized to resist mortgage evictions, held talks or

#### TEMP AGENCY ATTACKED ON MARINA STREET

Is it even necessary to justify attacking a business of exploitation and precarity? In fact, not attacking it would be a grave lack of respect for ourselves and for the tradition of struggle on 1 May. For that reason, we decided to join rebels all over the world who still remember that the night of 30 April is a night dedicated to sabotage. Death to the State and Long Live Anarchy.

—Banda Subversiva de Piedras  
Voladoras

*Communique translated from Barcelona  
Indymedia, from one action of many actions*

handed out flyers in the streets. The CNT protested and picketed against the firing and harassment of workers. Medical employees raised hell about the massive slashes to the health sector. Anonymous criminals smashed banks, or spray painted them in broad daylight, and there were also a series of actions in solidarity with the Chilean anarchists in prison.

In the last weeks of April, a black poster appeared on the walls across the city bearing the title: “1 May: Day of Struggle, Day of Vengeance” and a text about the history of May Day. Around the same time another poster came out bearing the faces of three of the last urban guerrillas executed by the Franco regime, pointing out that these popular heroes weren’t martyrs and victims, but combatants, and they didn’t die for democracy, but for the struggle against capitalism, and that struggle is still ongoing.

During the last days of the countdown, the two different CNT factions added their own posters announcing the protest, one under the title “let’s regain the spirit of struggle,” and what they lacked in content, they made up for in quantity, with few city blocks going undecorated.

In the early morning hours of Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 arterial roads leading into Barcelona were blocked at two different points by barricades of burning tires, the work of people the police dubiously designated as “squatters”. A few hours later the Chilean consulate was occupied in solidarity with the comrades on hunger strike.

The day before, a protest had been called for that evening after the suicide of Patricia Heras, one of the prisoners of the police frame-up of 4F<sup>6</sup>. Not even present at the scene of a riot in 2006 at which a cop was severely injured, Patricia Heras received a three year prison sentence after an excruciatingly long trial process. She had finished several months of her sentence and was currently in the “third degree” (weekdays out, nights locked up). On the night of Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, rather than go back to prison, she went home and killed herself. On Thursday afternoon, hundreds of people gathered in El Forat in a torrential downpour and took to the streets, marching to Wad Ras, the women’s prison, filling the air with chants against the police and the prisons, and the walls with graffiti of the same ilk. At the prison they lit off firecrackers and traded shouts of love with those on the other side of the wall.

In the morning of Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> May, the CNT(s) and CGT, not to mention some independentist groups and the official unions, had their various public events. The CNT, it is worth noting, marched down Les Rambles, a street usually off-limits to protests, shocked the tourists, spray painted, and casually sabotaged a little construction site in Raval, breaking the tools and telling the workers to join the strike.

<sup>6</sup>The 4F defendants were arrested and charged after a police officer in Barcelona was hit over the head by a flower pot and lost mobility in his lower body during a party at a squat.



The big protest was to gather at five in the afternoon at Jardinet de Gracia. Rather than marching through the tourist-infested centre, as most marches do, this one was planning to head to Sarrià, the quintessential rich neighbourhood up on the hill. At 5:30pm, a crowd of four to six thousand set off up Diagonal Avenue, with flags and banners marking different contingents of anarcho-syndicalists, black bloc, and non-party independentistas. At the first intersection where a large group of riot police could be seen, the march stopped and people shouted at them lividly. The name “Patricia Heras” rang through the air. A short while later, the President of Catalunya and another high functionary were burned in effigy. The first government office on the route was bathed in paint. It seems that this time, people skipped the lightbulbs or eggshells and just went with mason jars.

The sound of breaking glass from the paintbombs was contagious, and soon more and more people in the crowd were masked up, small groups making sorties to the side of the march to leave graffiti. As the crowd turned up Via Augusta into the rich zone, people decided the time for vengeance was at hand. First, every bank, chain store, or dumpster the march passed was spray painted with anarchist slogans. Before long, a small crew broke out of the march and attacked a bank with hammers. Except for a few Stalinists, everyone in the crowd cheered, from students to grandparents. The attacks multiplied, as people flipped dumpsters and set them alight. The more prepared attacked right and left with hammers, the more spontaneous liberated stones and bottles from the stultifying urban architecture. Within an hour, easily a hundred targets—banks, government buildings, chain stores, beauty salons, car dealerships, luxury car showrooms, privately owned luxury cars—were vandalized, with several smashed to hell and damaged on the inside too.

Twice, a large group of undercovers attempting to approach were chased off with rocks and bottles. After the destruction started in earnest, the riot vans drove up on the back of the march, but they were held off by the rear banner—valiantly carried first by indepes then by CNT activists—and dissuaded by dumpsters, paintbombs, and bottles. Strategically, the police were disinclined to attack the march because charging a multigenerational labor union march that included a broad political spectrum would come with a serious backlash in a country that remembers its history and is apt to associate the police with dictatorship. Neither were they keen on fragmenting a single march into a hundred violent fractions in the middle of a wealthy neighbourhood whose streets are not wide and grid-like but narrow and windy.

But finally, at about 7:30 around the altitude of Ganduxer, the destruction had reached such proportions that the police charged. Hundreds of riot cops and undercovers broke through the rear banner and crushed any resistance, sparking a general panic and causing the back of the march to split into three groups, some of which blockaded their exit streets with barricades and automobiles. They arrested six and beat many. The media claimed they used a new crowd

#### RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF PATRICIA HERAS IN BARCELONA

The night of Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, we attacked two banks on Rogent street with hammers. We did it to respond to the death of a comrade; to allow our rage to erupt rather than anaesthetizing it; so that those who profit off our misery also reap the consequences. We would like to be able to avenge Patricia attacking the cops, judges, and journalists responsible for the 4F frame-up, but at the moment, our desires aside, we'll stick with attacking two offices of their owners.

Patrici, we won't forget you. You are with us. We'll continue fighting against patriarchy, against the prisons and against all domination until everyone is free.

(Subsequently, on the night of 2nd May, the city hall of Girona, another city in Catalunya, was attacked with rocks and spray painted with the phrase, “We don't forget Patri, PSC [Socialist Party, in government at the time of the 4F frameup] murderers”)

The night of April 30<sup>th</sup>, the International Day of Sabotage, Witches' Night, attacks against temp agencies, banks, and labor institutions were carried out all across the city.

*Communique translated from Barcelona  
Indymedia*

control weapon consisting of a shotgun that sends out a precision, paralyzing shot that can take down specific troublemakers; however this appears to be misinformation that was included in a press release written before the protest ever happened. Those arrested report being pacified with truncheons, telescoping batons, or in one case, a teargas grenade launcher used as a bludgeon. Another rumour circulated that the police had hoped to use their new weapon during the protest, but would instead inaugurate it during any disorders after the Barcelona-Madrid football match a couple days later.

The different segments of the march quickly regrouped, leaving hundreds of items of black clothing strewn on the ground behind them, left Sarrià and returned to Diagonal, arriving at the end point, a building of symbolic importance in the struggle of the health sector workers, where a statement was read and the march was unconvened [ended]. Several individuals were arrested by undercover while leaving. It is assumed that those who filed their names to request the legalization of the march (organized by a joint group including the radical unions and some independent groups) will receive heavy fines, which will be paid by the organizations behind them.

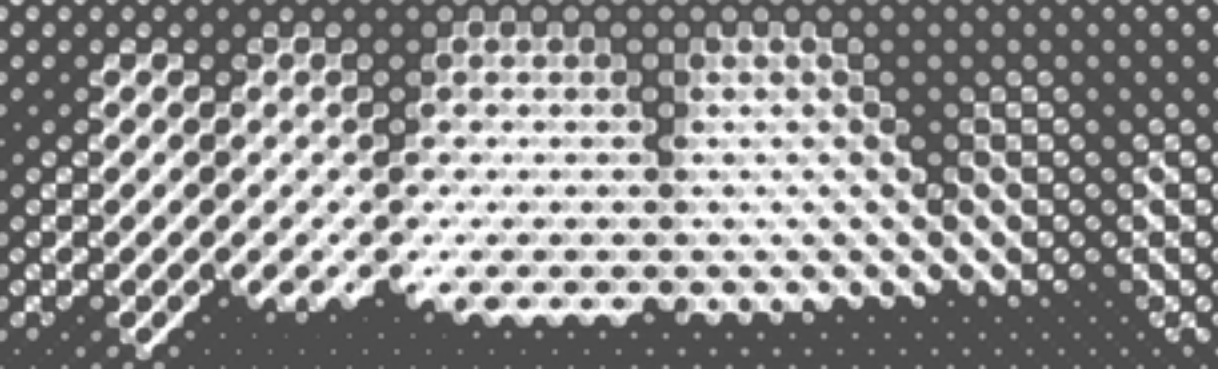
That night graffiti went up on the walls celebrating the acts of revenge taken against the rich.

Fifteen people were arrested in total. The following day, a concentration was held outside the police station, and two hundred people blocked the street. The following day, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, a continuous crowd gathered outside the courts to welcome the detainees upon their release. Four people were charged with the equivalent of misdemeanors, and eleven people with the equivalent of felonies—public disorder, and in some cases assaulting authorities and destruction of property. In the most serious case, the comrade faces a prosecutor's petition of three and a half years in prison, while in many other cases the petition is for two years' imprisonment. One of the arrested had both his arms broken, and many others were injured as well. Most were beaten during and after the arrest.

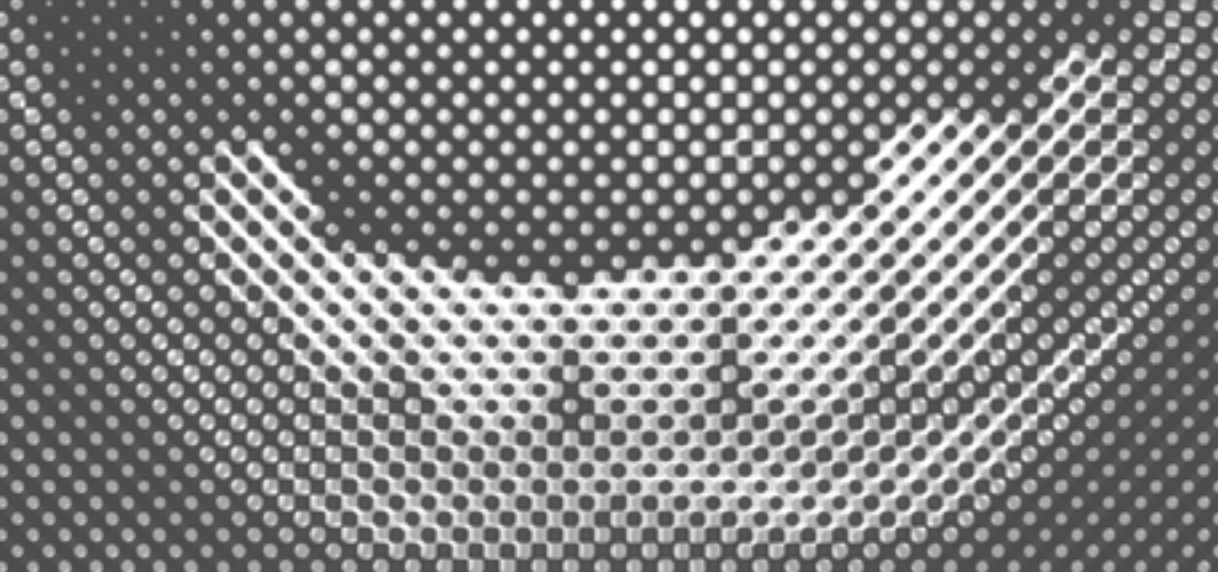
The common feeling is that the struggle will continue, and stronger than before. Even after the last prisoner was released, the rich neighbourhood remained trashed. Passersby did double-takes to see a paving stone two feet across lodged comfortably in the front window of an Audi dealership as business tried unconvincingly to carry on as usual. The social war had come home.

Left: graffiti left on a bank during May Day  
Right: Fires burn in the street during the May Day riot





# GENERAL STRIKE!



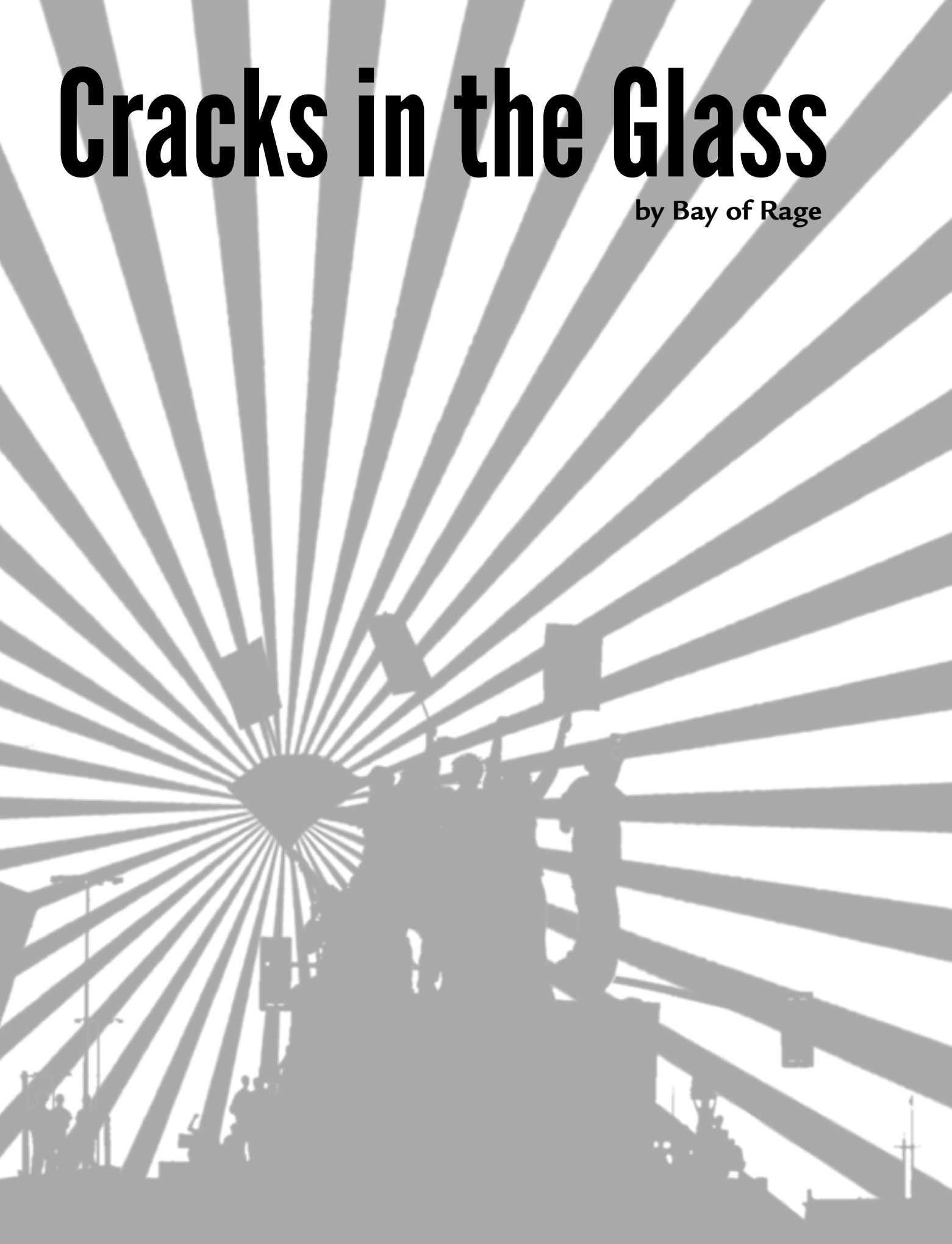
**BEGINS** **MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

**NO WORK, NO SCHOOL, NO HOUSEWORK,  
NO SHOPPING, NO BANKING...**



# Cracks in the Glass

by Bay of Rage



“A part of this bank belongs to me too, so this is a little piece that belongs to me and my family, and my people here. That’s why I want to keep this as a memory of today when the people of Oakland stood up against the banks”

Geraldo Dominguez uttered these words during the November 2<sup>nd</sup> Oakland General Strike in the foreground of a city in revolt. With his child near him an ABC7 camera person managed to catch Mr. Dominguez collecting shards of broken glass in front of a recently destroyed Wells Fargo. In his hands he held the material memory of a day of intense and direct struggle. A day when thousands of people converged on downtown Oakland, snake marches shut down banks and business all over the city, thousands marched to one of the busiest ports in North America to shut it down, thousands celebrated the short lived occupation of a foreclosed building and downtown was imbued with a spirit of resistance well into the early hours of the next morning. By now the events of November 2<sup>nd</sup> have been analyzed and reflected upon by many. However, it is important to understand these events in the most honest terms, reflecting on the real content of the activity and the political configurations of Occupy Oakland that produced them. There is no better place to begin formulating this understanding than with the Occupy Oakland General Assemblies.

From the very beginning the General Assembly of Occupy Oakland has been contentious political and logistical ground. As the main coordinating body of a decentralized and leaderless movement, the General Assembly has often acted to help facilitate logistical questions of the camp that are necessary to reproduce the space its self (i.e. the coordination of various internal committees, security, etc). There has never been one concrete political line for the whole of the Occupation. For this reason there have only been a few actions done in the name of Occupy

Oakland but many done in relation to it. This formula has existed to constantly encourage autonomous actions within and outside of the camp that do not require consensus from the General Assembly. This has allowed for both infrastructure within the camp and political activity surrounding the occupation to take a life of its own, be completely decentralized, prevent co-option by small groups and breathe as many voices and actions into the movement as possible. Without the encouragement of autonomous activity and initiative not only would the camp its self not be so vibrant and politically relevant but November 2<sup>nd</sup> would not have been as successful as it was. The basic outline of November 2<sup>nd</sup> was coordinated through the General Assembly as was the call to march on the Port of Oakland in solidarity with the ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union) and their struggle against EGT (Export Grain Terminal). However the snake marches through out the day, bank shutdowns, speakers, mini-rallies, the nighttime building occupation and other activity were not. It is both due to the impracticality of coordinating everything in a large General Assembly and also a reflection of a common understanding and sentiment that has been central to Occupy Oakland from the beginning:

Oakland protesters smash windows at a Wells Fargo bank branch





autonomous activity, actions and initiative are not only welcomed and encouraged but absolutely essential to the proper functioning, expansion and relevance of Occupy Oakland. The centrality of autonomous activity has been reflected in the variety of positions, sentiments and forms of activity that have circulated through the Occupy Oakland encampment since it's beginning. These various sentiments and forms have influenced the direction of the camp as a whole in different ways. Since the beginning many anti-capitalist, anarchist and other militant ideas have been integral in all areas of the camp. This has separated Occupy Oakland from other occupations around the country. For example, where as in Zucotti Park at Occupy Wall Street the police presence is constant around the periphery, at Oscar Grant Plaza from day one the police were not allowed anywhere near the camp. Multiple times since the camp's inception police have attempted to come into the camp and solidify a presence to control and monitor the situation. Every single time

this happened groups of anywhere from twenty to one hundred people virulently and bombastically forced the police to leave. It was quickly understood that the police were not welcome at any time and their presence would produce a response from the camp. During one of the first general assemblies it was officially decided that no politicians or political parties were allowed in the camp nor would they be supported or endorsed by Occupy

Oakland. Weeks before the Occupation began Democratic Party front group Moveon.org organized a labour rally and march in the plaza. They had scheduled the mayors of Berkeley and Richmond to speak. Upon learning this information the General Assembly immediately decided that it would not allow these politicians to speak at the rally and forced Moveon.org to relocate their speeches elsewhere. In another situation the City of Oakland attempted to subvert the aims of the camp by criticizing the Occupation on many fronts. Everything from tents to the kitchen became points of criticism and used to justify the immediate termination of the camp. When a letter from the city expressed this it was set aflame on stage during a General Assembly. In another situation a few days after the militaristic police raid on Oscar Grant Plaza, Jean Quan herself tried to speak at a General Assembly after the initial time for speakers was over. She was immediately booed off the stage and chased back into City Hall. With all of these actions and others alongside the brutal actions of the police, Occupy Oakland became the frontrunner of the entire Occupy movement pushing it in ever more radical directions eventually resulting in the call for a General Strike on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

During the General Strike an anti-capitalist march was called for to meet at Telegraph and Broadway at 2pm. This march was attended by over two thousand people and was a product of autonomous initiative. While it was not called for by the General Assembly it was attended en masse and was intended to be in solidarity with Occupy Oakland, against the police, and demonstrate a political will antagonistic to capitalism itself and taking inspiration from the political culture brewing in Occupy Oakland. During this march individuals took it upon themselves to directly attack banks and the Oakland Whole Foods. The banks have been on the receiving end of criticism and one of the main targets of discontent



for the entire Occupy movement. Whole Foods is a product of gentrification in Oakland, a symbol of pacifying green-capitalist consumer politics and also, it was reported, planned on taking punitive action against any workers who attended the strike. It was during this march that differing tactical positions were explored than had been at snake marches and bank shut downs earlier in the day. These tactics included sabotage and property destruction. Certain tactical choices made on a march autonomously called for outside of the General Assembly were decisions made by participants in a specific situation. This is no deviation away from the basic formula for how tactical decisions had been made in the past – those present in the situation decided to act how they felt it would be appropriate to act. Those people in the march who attempted to physically restrain others tactical decisions acted as authoritarian as the police themselves. Those who engaged in direct attacks on the banks and Whole Foods were not a “fringe element” or acting in contradiction to the motives and aims of Occupy Oakland. They were as much a part of it as those who sit in front of the police upon their encroachment or those wanting permits for demonstrations. They are not on the periphery of another wise “peaceful movement” – they are an integral component tactically, strategically and politically. During the march it was not uncommon to hear cheers and see jubilant smiles by many at the sound of a bank being destroyed. It was as though those in attendance saw the impossible before their eyes – people actually fighting back. To say that this activity was a deviation forgets the principles and logic upon which tactical and strategic decisions throughout Occupy Oakland had been made – autonomously.

Another autonomous act that took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> was the occupation of a foreclosed building on 16<sup>th</sup> street in the evening hours. By the time the march from the Port had returned people had

taken it upon themselves to occupy a building that once housed a myriad of social services. While this act in and of itself was not (and did not have to be) passed by the General Assembly it came in the wake of an initiative passed by the General Assembly a few days prior. This resolution committed to materially and politically supporting any occupations that were to occur in Oakland and beyond. This lends a certain political continuity between the General Assembly and the building occupation – those who acted were acting both autonomously and in direct line with the political content of the Occupation itself. This occupation also expanded from being held just within the parameters of a plaza into other locations of social life thus increasing the contentious political and strategic content of the movement itself. The space was intended to house workshops, a library and more occupiers. It also was supposed to undermine the authoritarian social relations of capitalism predicated on private property and the state. The state becomes irrelevant when people in large numbers provide for one another and do not allow any room for the state to promise their own services. By taking over this building people collectively bit the hand that feeds because that with enough initiative at the right moment the state and capital fade into irrelevance. It



Oakland protesters use fire extinguisher to paint on a Whole Foods Grocery store that refused to close for the general strike

is with this material acknowledgement that those in the building intended to stage and continue with political attacks. Realizing this the police began to assemble and move in to both quell and stop the situation before it continued. It must be reiterated that this action was autonomously organized and in line with a resolution passed by the General Assembly and was not a deviation from other escalatory autonomous activity through out November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Upon learning that the police were advancing, barricades made of garbage bins, tires, pallets and other debris were quickly erected on both sides of 16th. The intention of the police operation was to prevent the expansion of the Occupation outside of the plaza. The intention of the barricades was to defend the newly acquired space and make police advancement more difficult. As they moved forward scuffles began between those in the streets and the police. As a form of self-defence a barricade at 16<sup>th</sup> and Telegraph was lit aflame. The police attacked people, injuring and arresting many. The space was lost however the struggle in the street showed that it would not be taken away without a fight.

After the police solidified their lines at each of the barricades and forced people out of the newly acquired social space a large and diverse crowd retaliated in downtown Oakland. Various businesses were looted, covered in spray paint or attacked. This was not random but the product of a direct police advancement and threat. 14<sup>th</sup> and Broadway became the epicenter of an earthquake, with redecorated walls, and shattered glass all under a banner that read "Death to Capitalism". These acts were not merely acts of naïve destruction for its own sake. They were expressions of anger and resistance that cannot be contained within the formula of a march and three word chants. They were an explosive reaction against this society in an attempt to reclaim and recreate everything that has

been stolen. Through material destruction and the fire of burning barricades the ashes and debris of this society began to, if even for just a night, reconstruct the world anew.

November 2<sup>nd</sup> showed the world what is coming. The terrain of unemployment, gang injunctions, school and library closures, a murderous police force and poverty gave birth to the radical essence of Occupy Oakland. Building occupations alongside struggles with the police will not be unique to Oakland for long – they are the beginning of what is to come. It is because this society cannot provide that these measures are not merely coming from a political consciousness but out of direct material necessity. It is this necessity, so apparent here in Oakland, for housing, food and protection from the police that has made Occupy Oakland everything it is. As these conditions continue to spread in ways as of now unseen, so too will resistance to them. Buildings will be occupied. Police will be fought. Banks will be attacked. From broken glass to abandoned buildings everything will be reclaimed.

Geraldo Dominguez held in his hands the broken pieces of a world stolen from all of us, of a broken society constituting the foundation for something else. A society of profits, value and property that we create but cannot hold, that we produce but cannot touch. That is ours but so far away. This separation is the reason that spaces and buildings are occupied in the first place – it is through occupation and reclamation that we can take back our lives from a system predicated on separation in all areas of life. Mr. Dominguez held pieces of glass that stood as an omnipresent reminder of this separation until they shattered on the ground. It is then that they became a memory of struggle, a piece of history, a broken looking glass capable of staring into a world of possibility. November 2<sup>nd</sup> was a day that he and all of us could see clearly through the cracks in the glass.

# Migration, Movements, Wages and War in the Americas:

## Reasons for Unity on May Day 2006 – And After

By Midnight Notes and Friends\*

**W**e are witnessing an apparently unprecedented moment in the Americas, both North and South. On the one side, millions of undocumented workers—the least visible and most repressed workers—have repeatedly demonstrated in US cities, alongside their many supporting co-workers, against a congressional bill that would criminalize them simply for being in the US without proper papers, and criminalize US citizens who provide them with assistance. On the other, the people of Latin America in election after election are voting into power governments whose platforms, and sometimes their practices, reject the economic policies that the US government, on behalf of global corporations, has been supporting for two decades. These policies (often named “neoliberal”) have been the source of the decline of wages and working conditions throughout the Americas, as well as the rest of the planet.

In these surging movements, we are witnessing a rebellion of people throughout the Americas. They are rising up against their fate of being driven from their lands, targeted for repression and even death, forced into sweatshops paying starvation wages or finding no income at all. The millions who have been forced

to migrate to the US, Canada and other nations face humiliation, repression, discrimination and super exploitation as second-class persons in apartheid systems constructed on immigration status.

This pan-American rebellion may seem surprising, since it comes at a time of the “war on terrorism,” an apparently near-endless “war” reminiscent of the Cold War. The political atmosphere that has been generated by this war has made it easy to pass repressive legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act and to demonize migrants as potential terrorists.

However, this non-violent rebellion is not historically unprecedented. It is similar to what took place in the 1950s when the Cold War and the terror inspired by the possibility of nuclear war was unable to contain the rebellion of African-Americans who refused to “wait” until the “threat of communism” was “under control” to bring down the US apartheid based on race. They demanded “Justice Now!” in the face of the congressional commissions that were roaming the country claiming to find Communist spies and traitors in unions, school boards, civil rights groups and universities throughout the country. Through unrelenting struggle during the height of the cold war, the black civil



rights movement destroyed established US race apartheid.

But the US movement was not alone. It operated in conjunction with the anti-colonial movements in Africa that at the same time were demanding an end to white imperial control of the African continent by Britain, France and Portugal. The US civil rights movement and the anti-colonial movements gave strength to each other, as the political reverberation between Birmingham and Algiers, between Watts and Nairobi, amplified each others' demands and echoed arguments from the "center" to the "periphery" of the world.

The new pan-American movement, feeling its growing power, has planned a new kind of May Day for 2006 in the US. The movement has called for immigrants and their supporters to stop participating in the US economy, either as (waged or unwaged) workers (including students) or as consumers, for a day. This boycott may even spread to other regions of North and Central America. This one-day equivalent of a national boycott and strike was called to make clear to everyone the importance of immigrants (especially undocumented ones) to the functioning of US society, including everyone's immediate community.

We write to support common and overlapping demands of movements in the North and Latin America; to explain to others in the North who are documented (citizens and legal residents alike) why we firmly believe that these demands are both just and in all of our interests; to explain why all workers and activists in the North should support the movements in Latin America; and to explain to people in movements that may seem somewhat distant from the immigrant movements, such as the anti-war and anti-globalization movements, the reasons why theirs is a shared struggle with immigrants and the movements of Latin America.

The most immediate demands of the immigrant movement in the North America include: (1) the defeat of any legislation

that would criminalize undocumented immigrants; and (2) the legalization of undocumented immigrants who now are in the US or Canada. The most common demand of the movements across Latin America is an end to neoliberal economic policies and U.S. and transnational corporate domination.

Are these just demands? Why should US or Canadian citizens and legal residents who are workers support these demands? Will support for both immigrants and for movements, in the lands from which the movements come, strengthen or undermine the conditions of US and Canadian citizens and documented migrants? We must ask both questions because US and Canadian workers have often not supported just policies when they thought these policies were against their interests. The clearest example of this was the support most white workers gave to the US version of race apartheid, "Jim Crow" laws, for the first half of the twentieth century.

## JUSTICE

We claim the immigrants' movements are just because the primary reasons for migration to the north are political and military repression, intense economic exploitation, and the ensuing social crises, all fostered by the US and Canadian government. Approximately eighty percent of the undocumented migrants to the North were born in countries south of the Rio Bravo/Grande. The other twenty percent mostly come from other regions of the world also facing devastation, upheaval and economic crisis.

The US and Canadian governments and corporations have backed repressive regimes and have pushed these regimes to impose laws that have made it easy to exploit their people. The latest version of these policies, "neoliberalism," requires cutting state assistance to workers and opening the economy to the free entry and exit of foreign capital. Since the consequences of neoliberalism

include destruction of communities, privatization of common lands, and reduction of income for the bottom half of the population, neoliberalism requires repression to succeed, especially in countries whose working class is already impoverished. Together, repression and neoliberalism produce community disintegration, economic and environmental devastation, and fear. Many are forced to flee to save themselves and their families from annihilation.

It is very easy to prove that the US government has been responsible for military repression in Latin America: The dozens of US invasions of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the last century, the sordid history of the US military's "School of the Americas," the US and Canadian support for coups against democratically elected leaders—from Guatemala in the 1950s and Brazil in the 1960s, to Chile and Argentina in the 1970s, down to the failed coup attempt against Hugo Chavez in 2002 and the successful coups against Aristide in 1991 and 2004—are ample testimonies to the fact that US and Canadian government has been directly or indirectly responsible for the repression in Latin America that has forced many to flee their homes with justifiable fear for their lives.

The consequences of neoliberalism are equally evident. We need merely look at Mexico, the primary source of US and Canadian undocumented migrants, and NAFTA, a classic neoliberal agreement, to see that the results have been devastating. President Salinas relied on US support to steal his election victory. He then implemented neoliberal policies carried on by his successors, Zedillo and Fox, and approved NAFTA.

In two decades, the value of the Mexican minimum wage has declined more than 80 percent. In twelve years of NAFTA, there has been a sharp drop in the average wage and a dramatic increase in poverty. While the "economy" grows, the people increasingly starve. One

major consequence is migration to the US – though Pres. Clinton sold NAFTA to the US on the grounds that it would reduce Mexican immigration into the US. The same catastrophes can be tied to neoliberal economic policies as they have been applied throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. They have created a continent that has allowed capital to flow freely but left the majority of the people in deepening poverty and unable to legally follow the money toward possible jobs and survival.

So long as the US and Canadian government supports with its economic and military might the neoliberal policies and the repression of the struggles against them, the people who are displaced economically and politically should be welcomed here. This is based on a premise of justice: When one is even partially responsible for the destruction of the livelihood and homes of people, then one must do what one can to compensate for this destruction. If we North American workers cannot stop our government's behaviour that causes demonstrable harm to other workers, then it is only just that we support the most basic demands of workers who have been displaced. If your child intentionally burned down your neighbours' houses, then it is incumbent on you to at least welcome them into your home, if they wish to come.

Surely, the long-term "solution" is to end the US and Canadian government's past, present and, unfortunately, near-term future actions that have kept millions of Latin Americans and others around the globe repressed and poor. But until we win this solution, we should fight to prevent the policies that further repress and immiserate the immigrants who live here in North America because of these policies.

## INTERESTS

What is just is one thing, but is this just behaviour suicidal for US and Canadian citizens and legal resident workers? Won't increased immigration lead to lower

wages for us here? Doesn't the "iron law of wages" state that more workers competing for the same number of jobs lead to lower wages and worse working conditions? And as it is also just for people to defend themselves, should we not approve of policies that intensify border controls to keep out terrorists? In other words, even if we agree that North American workers have some responsibility to their fellow workers in Latin America and other parts of the world, is just thing to do under the circumstances so much against our real interests that it is politically pointless to insist on it? This has been the main political problem that has surrounded the immigration issue for many years.

But is it true that the just thing to do (support immigrant workers) is at odds with the interest of documented workers, especially those at the bottom of the wage hierarchy? First, we should remember that the work that immigrant workers largely do is the dirtiest, the most difficult work. It is essential, and there is a lot of it. For the average immigrant worker, moving north to escape repression and economic misery is hardly a picnic. The idea that immigrants come to the North to take advantage of "welfare" is a myth that has been debunked many times over. It is now in the category of the claim that African slaves in the US plantations were happy because they had such secure jobs. In fact, undocumented immigrant workers work very hard at jobs with a very low wage that makes large profits for their employers and billions of extra dollars for Social Security and Medicare systems.

When undocumented immigrants come to the US and Canada, they face slave-like working conditions that are backed up by the repressive apparatus directed by the US government (especially the agents of the Department of Homeland Security, but increasingly local and state police). This repressive apparatus and lack of rights as workers and humans force undocumented workers to accept lower wages, substandard working conditions

and humiliation. These workers often fear standing up for their rights, never mind demanding more, since their employers or even other workers might turn them into the immigration agents or police.

What is the source of these low wages? Is it the quantity of workers or their status? Is there such a large competition for these jobs that leads to the reduction of wages, or is it the very undocumented status of the immigrants that is the source of this reduction? We argue that the latter is a more important element. If it were dealt with, it would lead to higher wages for both immigrant and citizen and legal resident workers.

Our argument is that a neoliberal situation is the worst possible world for wages and working conditions across the board. That situation arises when capital can flow across borders freely while workers cannot. In that case, employers threaten citizen workers whenever they demand more wages, by pointing to the fact that unless the workers accept lower wages, they will easily take their production abroad. Employers threaten the undocumented workers with deportation if they are involved in labor struggles. In either case, workers are intimidated and fear to struggle for their interests. It even appears as though it is in their interests to oppose each other. The situation we are describing is exactly the one that prevails in the US and Canada.

In addition, the slave-like situation of undocumented workers creates the conditions for lowering the wage floor in the US and Canada, especially affecting those workers competing for low-wage jobs. This is a far more significant cause for the erosion of wages in the US than is the number of job competitors, for if the floor is slavery and bare subsistence, the rights and incomes of all workers accordingly decline.

Therefore, the end of neoliberalism neither cross border capital flows are restricted, or workers are allowed to move across borders freely, or both--will lead to



an increase in wages for all. It is in the interest of both US citizen workers and undocumented immigrant workers in the US to oppose neoliberalism and not to oppose each other.

But in addition to employers using the immigrant apartheid to super exploit these workers, other racist and xenophobic elements use it to take advantage, humiliate and mistreat undocumented workers and their families. The economic conditions and the social antagonisms lead to divisions among workers that make it harder for working people to organize together for better wages and working conditions.

This being the case, only coming together to eliminate the immigrant apartheid can establish a basis on which to battle for better conditions and wages and against neoliberalism. Thus, it is apparent to us that support for immigrant workers is not only just, it is also in the self-interest of most US/Canadian citizens and documented immigrants.

#### Other movements

But what about support for movements in other nations? Why should documented US and Canadian workers care about them? Justice is again one reason, as the horrendous conditions against which people rebel are conditions created in large part by the US and Canadian governments. Self-interest is another: if living conditions were better in Latin America and the Caribbean, people would not be compelled to move to the North. If corporations could not undermine US and Canadian wages by employing lower-waged workers in Latin America, then North American workers have a better chance of stopping their decline in living. And if worker people are to establish a world of shared well-being instead of exploitation, it will require unity across national borders.

Across Latin America and in the Caribbean, a variety of movements and struggles are gaining strength. One form of the struggles has been the election

of new governments. Some that are supposed to represent and be responsive to working/low-income/indigenous people appear not to be so (e.g., Lula in Brazil); some seem now to be (Chavez in Venezuela); while in other cases it is too early to tell (Evo Morales in Bolivia; Preval in Haiti).

These governments deserve explicit support to the degree they practically oppose neoliberalism and are responsive to and even supportive of the movements. While the positioning of these governments depends on many factors, the power of the movements to ensure the governments do their bidding is among the most important.

That power of the movements in turn significantly depends on whether the US And Canadian governments will be able to organize their destruction via economic or military means. Here, the willingness and ability of North American workers to support them is essential.

Opposition by US workers to US-initiated or backed coups should be a matter of basic principle, [the same should be said for Canadian workers]. Sadly, some activists violated this principle when they excused the coup in Haiti against Aristide by pointing to Aristide's purported flaws. Similarly, the US state has been demonizing Chavez. The point is not the perfection of Aristide or Chavez, or even whether they reasonably (in the current world context) support movements; it is whether the most egregious exploiter, the US, should be free to promote coups. In any event, it is more likely that governments will actually be responsive to and supportive of movements if they do not face US intervention. It is the power and growth of the movements that is most essential, and those movements should not have to fight US coups or military intervention.

To the extent the movements' power produces improved conditions for the people, those people will be less compelled to flee to another nation and

less vulnerable to super-exploitation in their home nations. Both results are beneficial to the workers, documented and undocumented, in the US and Canada.

In addition, it is essential to oppose initiatives such as the Free Trade Act of the Americas (FTAA) and to oppose US military involvement (advisors in Colombia; the School of the Americas military training program). These are tasks of the movements in both Latin America and in the North. Stopping such initiatives increases the likelihood of movement success and of not allowing governments to betray them.

But based on historical experience and current facts, the US government will not peacefully allow the movements to eliminate neoliberalism and establish new economic and social relations. The US and Canadian anti-war movement must develop now the capacity to resolutely oppose covert and overt government operations in Latin America.

But the US and Canadian anti-war movement has lacked power and a successful strategy. Bush simply ignored massive demonstrations, while voters in 2004 had the choice of two pro-war candidates. The rising power of the immigrant movements, expressed in the strikes and boycotts of May Day as well as the student walkouts, demonstrations and boycotts of the previous month, may signal the capacity of movements in the US to take far more powerful actions than has been possible for many years.

The repressive laws ostensibly designed to combat “terrorism” will be used against those in the North who support the movements in Latin America, as well as the immigrant movements within the US and Canada. Thus, all those who oppose the PATRIOT act and similar laws and who support civil liberties should support the immigrant movement and the movements in Latin America, for the power of those movements will make it harder for repression in the name of “anti-terrorism” to succeed. On the

other hand, the power of the immigrant movements and the movements in Latin America strengthen the capacity to retract repressive legislation.

Thus, the anti-war and anti-globalization movements, [and the current Occupy movement] must be pro-immigrant in the US as well as against economic and military imperialism in Latin America and the Caribbean. They must support the movements of workers across the continents, indeed across the world, for real peace and prosperity. Only then will forced migration end.

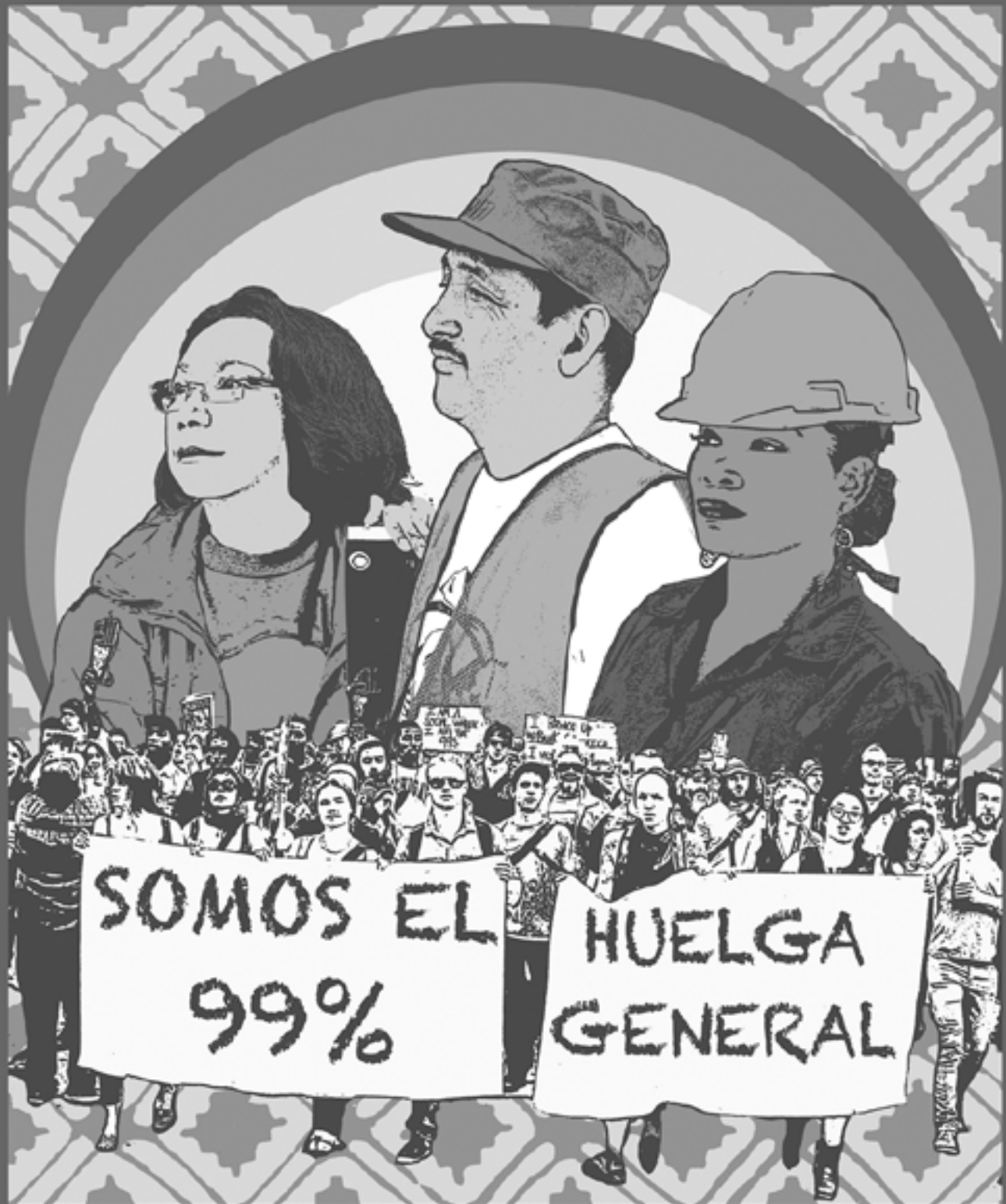
## CONCLUSION

The rebellion of Latin American workers in Latin America and immigrants in the US and Canada is radically challenging neoliberalism’s pillars (regardless of the often soft and even pro-US rhetoric of some components of that movement). The question is whether we “American” workers in the United States of America will join them. If we do, then we will begin to liberate ourselves from the demoralization of living in the worst of all possible worlds for workers. If we do not, then we will lose the opportunity to do justice and act in our own interest. This is a rare historical moment. To fail and be stuck in this worst of all possible positions will prove to be a hell on earth for us here in the US. So on May Day and after, let us join together, documented and undocumented, stop our work and our buying, go into the streets and escape our earthly damnation. Let us also join together with the anti-war movement this May Day and after to stop US and Canadian aggression throughout the world, a major source of planetary forced migration. Let us unite, because that truly is both just and in the self-interest of all working people.

BASTA YA...Si Se PUEDE...

# 1º DE MAYO 2012

## TOMA LAS CALLES







# No one is illegal

## #MAY1TO: May Day of Action

**P**aid or unpaid, documented or undocumented, we are workers. We are families. We are im/migrants. And on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, we take to the streets.

Corporations, governments, the one percent, carry out war, throw us in prisons, make us poor, destroy public services, try to deport us, attack unions, and poison the environment. They deny us freedom and dignity.

Since 2006, No One Is Illegal - Toronto has coordinated a mass anti-capitalist, anti-colonial demonstration for migrant justice. This year, we are working with M1M [May 1<sup>st</sup> Movement] and (de)Occupy Toronto to coordinate May Day. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, international workers' day, join us at 4pm at City Hall for a rally and march to respect Indigenous sovereignty, insist that no one is illegal, for international workers solidarity, to defend and expand public services, to stop prison expansion and corporate bail outs, to end imperialist wars and aggression, to build people's power, and to move beyond capitalism.

Canada is on a racist, anti-migrant war path. Grandparents and parents can't reunite with loved ones. Asylum seekers can't get refugee status and if the Refugee Exclusion Act (Bill C-31) passes the lucky few who did get refugee status could risk losing it. Migrant workers keep slaving in the country, dying by the dozens in car crashes like the ones in Hampstead while more and more people become precarious.

Racist security certificate legislation is still on the books. Ableist and discriminatory laws means that citizenship rejections have doubled. New immigrants see their limited services cut as austerity measures are imposed. Homelessness and unemployment haunt people of color and indigenous communities.

Our children are dropping out of school. Our families are being locked up as Bill C-11 gets passed. Toronto police has a file on every black youth in some neighbourhoods. Many indigenous communities don't have clean drinking water or decent schools and are facing a housing crisis. Mining, logging, and fishing companies are forcing themselves on to sovereign Indigenous territories in digging up the earth, polluting the air and water, and laying down pipelines.

This war at 'home' is wound up in the war 'abroad'. Canadian armies support the occupation in Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq where thousands are being murdered. Free Trade Agreements with Europe, India, Colombia, Israel, Mexico and others give Canadian corporations impunity to destroy the lands and homes of poor people and people of color everywhere. The drums of war against Iran are beating. Environmental agreements that could protect Mother Earth are viciously fought off by Harper's corrupt government. These economic and military wars displace people, forcing many to migrate.

CONTINUED... PG. 50

# GENERAL STRIKE!



## NOV 2ND

# LIBERATE OAKLAND

## AND SHUT DOWN THE 1%



**MAY DAY** **#MAY1TO**

**RALLY & MARCH**

**MAY 1**  
**4 PM**

**TUESDAY**  
**NATHAN PHILLIPS**

**TORONTO CITY HALL**  
**SQUARE**

**QUEEN & BAY**

In spite of this, we are in a moment of global resistance. The Arab Spring blossoms into its second year. Anti-austerity fights locally against Ford and McGuinty and globally gain immense support. Be it the fights against the Keystone XL pipeline or the online spying bill, mobilized opposition continues to gain victories. Harper's grip seems to be weakening.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, join with people across North America, to demand, to assert and to commit to:

**JUSTICE for Undocumented People and Migrant Workers: STATUS FOR ALL! ACCESS WITHOUT FEAR!**

**JUSTICE for Our Communities:** raise the rates, living wage, unionization, free and accessible public services for all, violent cops out of our neighborhoods, no hand outs to corporations, end patriarchy, white supremacy, homo/transphobia and disableism

**FREEDOM to Move, FREEDOM to Return, and FREEDOM to Stay**

**FREEDOM from Colonization, Military and Economic Wars and Environmental Degradation**

(de)Occupy movements are also calling for:

**NO WORK**  
**NO SCHOOL**  
**NO SHOPPING**  
**NO BANKING**  
**NO CHORES**



**O**ccupy Oakland Calls for Participation in a May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 Global General Strike.

The General Strike is back, retooled for an era of deep budget cuts, extreme anti-immigrant racism, and massive predatory financial speculation. In 2011, the number of unionized workers in the US stood at eleven point eight percent, or approximately fourteen point eight million people.

What these figures leave out are the growing millions of people in this country who are unemployed and underemployed. The numbers leave out the undocumented, and domestic and manual workers drawn largely from immigrant communities. The numbers leave out workers whose workplace is the home and a whole invisible economy of unwaged reproductive labour. The numbers leave out students who have taken on nearly one trillion dollars in debt, and typically work multiple jobs, in order to afford skyrocketing college tuition. The numbers leave out the huge percentage of black Americans that are locked up in prisons or locked out of stable or secure employment because of our racist society.

In December of 2011, Oakland's official unemployment rate was a devastating fourteen point one percent. As cities like Oakland are ground into the dust by austerity, every last public dollar will be fed to corrupt, militarized police departments in order to contain social unrest. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> of last year, Occupy Oakland carried out the first General Strike in the US since the 1946 Oakland General Strike, shutting down the center of the city and blockading the Port of Oakland. We must re-imagine a general strike for an age where most workers do not belong to labour unions, and where most of us are fighting for the privilege to work rather than for marginal improvements in working conditions. We must take the struggle into the streets, schools, and offices

of corrupt local city governments. A re-imagined general strike means finding immediate solutions for communities impacted by budget cuts and constant police harassment beyond changing government representatives. Occupy Oakland calls for and will participate in a new direction for the Occupy movement based on the recognition that we must not only find new ways to provide for our needs beyond the state; we must also attack the institutions that lock us into an increasingly miserable life of exploitation, debt, and deepening poverty everywhere. **IF WE CAN'T LIVE, WE WON'T WORK.**

May Day is an international holiday that commemorates the 1886 Haymarket Massacre, when Chicago police defending, as always, the interests of the one percent attacked and murdered workers participating in a general strike and demanding an eight hour workday. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite what politicians tell us, class war is alive and well against workers (rank-and-file and non-unionized), students, people of color, un- and underemployed, immigrants, homeless, women, queer/trans folks, and prisoners. Instead of finding common ground with monsters, it's time we fight them. And it's time we make fighting back an everyday reality in the Bay Area and beyond.

On May Day 2012, Occupy Oakland will join with people from all walks of life in all parts of the world around the world in a Global General Strike to shut down the global circulation of capital that every day serves to enrich the ruling classes and impoverish the rest of us. There will be no victory but that which we make for ourselves, reclaiming the means of existence from which we have been and continue to be dispossessed every day.

**REVOLT FOR A LIFE WORTH LIVING!**

**STRIKE • BLOCKADE • OCCUPY**

**Occupy Oakland will participate in Global General Strike**

**on May Day - May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012**

**by Occupy Oakland General Assembly**

# MAY<sup>ST</sup>



# GENERAL STRIKE

# Migrant worker advocacy in Guelph and May Day

*This is a transcript of an interview Erica did in late March 2012 with MaryCarl Guiao, co-founder and organizer with Fuerza/Puwersa, and host and producer of Migrant Matters Radio. Guiao spoke about the future of immigrants' rights in Canada, the May Day movement, and connecting struggles to unleash fundamental social transformation. Edited for length, full article to appear at [www.guelphpeak.org](http://www.guelphpeak.org)*

! Help us organize this year's  
• May Day events!  
[Fuerza.Puwersa@gmail.com](mailto:Fuerza.Puwersa@gmail.com)

**Erica:** Today I'm here, in a humble long-time downtown eatery, enjoying a cup of tea with MaryCarl Guiao, co-founder of Fuerza/Puwersa, a migrant worker advocacy group. Tell us about Fuerza/Puwersa.

**MaryCarl:** Well, most members of our group have been working with Fuerza/Puwersa since its inception in the fall of 2008. All members contribute their time and energy voluntarily, and we're comprised of working class people with immigrant and racialized backgrounds, as well as allies, living within the Guelph community; most of us are students.

A major common drive of our group members is our passion to widen mainstream consciousness about the detrimental effects of imperialism and pervasive corporate capitalism. With this group, we're able to help tackle a portion of the effects of globalized capitalism led by the Global North, and help raise awareness about how, specifically Canada, is intentionally, economically, socially, and systemically benefiting from and spawning poverty throughout the Global South.

One effect of imperialism and corporate globalization that our work primarily focuses on is the escalating repression,

deportations, and scapegoating of low-income migrants by the Canadian government, which is currently the new Harper majority.

We organize events both on campus and within the broader Guelph community to promote in-depth discussion about the injustices faced by migrant workers under the Canadian immigration system. This includes immigrants being paid very low wages, facing abuse and violations of their rights at the workplace, having almost no legal protections in general, and being constantly under threat of deportation at the whim of their employer. The overwhelming majority of them have no path to permanent residency. The continued inaction by government precludes any real resolution of these problems. These conditions only work to ensure that a growing number of immigrants are disposable, exploited labour. We've also organized events that shed light on the related issues of human migration, human displacement, racism, the continued povertization of people from the Global South, xenophobia, and how the Canadian ruling class is complicit in all this locally and internationally. As well, we've held events helping expose the injustices suffered by low income people who immigrated here from the



Global South, who are refugees and who are labeled as “non-status”. We aim to facilitate having all these people and their priorities and stories, which have all been ignored, downplayed and deemed unimportant, receive the honour they deserve by bringing forth their stories to the public.

And I should clarify that when I say status, I’m referring to immigration status. One can be categorized as being non-status in a few ways. For many, they were once state-authorized to reside and work within Canada on a visa or temporary work permit, but without the full legal status of a citizen or the “nearly full” status of permanent resident. However, if their permit expires, they then become non-status and are also labeled as “undocumented” or “illegal”. These terms also refer to people who cross state borders after having been unapproved for or without seeking state authorization, who are neither citizens nor permanent residents. The reasons for issuing non-approvals are always greatly unjust, demoralizing, and rooted in a racist, classist, and colonial narrative.

A person is in a very precarious situation if their residence or refugee status becomes less secure or is in limbo because being labeled as being non-status, undocumented, and illegal can bring frightening risks and consequences. Having precarious status exacerbates dependence, keeps people vulnerable of being super-exploited and abused, and negatively affects their overall health. For example, since Harper and “Minister of Censorship and Deportation” Jason Kenney took office in 2006, Canada’s national security policies have changed the definition of acceptable policing in Canada to include racial profiling and harassing people at women’s crisis shelters. As a result, people with precarious status have an increased difficulty accessing public services like police services, women’s shelters, and health care services.

This terminology stuff is irritating, I know.

**Erica:** Ya, and can get confusing to the lay person. From the description on your Facebook account, it says that “Above all and central to our work, is to be an effective ally to migrant racialized working-class people themselves, prioritizing their dignity and agency, and working to ensure they have a central position in what we do.” Touch upon that.

**MaryCarl:** Sure. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants seeking decent work have come to Canada through the ever expanding Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). This has made it such that it is likely you have walked by or come to talk to someone working under the TFWP. There’s an even greater chance that a Thai migrant worker has served you or someone you know coffee at Tim Hortons, you have met someone who has employed a Filipina migrant worker to take care of their children or elderly relative, or the food on your table has been grown, picked and/or packed by a Jamaican migrant worker. Most Canadians except this without question as part of our supposedly multicultural landscape, but many don’t realize that these are migrant workers in Canada who are providing cheap labour, and in turn don’t enjoy the same rights as Canadian citizens or residents.

Although we’ve been more involved with this in the past, our group plans to continue to work on being allies, “on the ground”, so to speak, with people who work under the TFWP in Canada.

So far, Fuerza/Puwersa have provided support to and worked with people working under different programs of the TFWP. We’ve worked with women working under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP); as well as those working as agricultural workers – mostly through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and the so-called “Low

Skilled” Workers Program (LSWP). We haven’t yet worked with people working under the TFWP as so-called “exotic” dancers or workers in so-called “high-skilled” occupations. The people we’ve built relationships with who work under the LCP mostly live in Guelph, and the people we work to build relationships with working under the SAWP and the LSWP, well, we drive to various locations throughout Southern Ontario to provide whatever support is needed. Support has come in various forms including: citizen volunteers acting as translators; providing help with the workers’ transportation via bike donations or helping shuttling people with our parents’ vehicles; organizing “Know Your Rights” workshops; health fairs; and socials like potlucks and camping events. All the while our group’s intentions are to help them gain access to supports that they need or are useful to them, while simultaneously providing more opportunities for these people to grow as humans; to have time to socialize and explore their interests; to be treated as someone who is not just a doormat – a worker some boss can overwork and underpay because no one’s there to hold them accountable.

While doing this work, we’re constantly deepening our understanding about the importance of having the migrant worker justice movement led and overseen by the people working under these migrant worker programs. Being in the presence of workers, we also become more conscious of the unearned assets that our Canadian birth certificates come with, which are denied to migrants. For instance, the wide range of job opportunities with labour law complying practices available to us, how some may even fall on our laps, the opportunities to apply for jobs that we are interested in doing, and the opportunities to move to a job within the same industry with a greater salary and benefits. These conditions are what dreams are made of for people working here as migrant workers. To hold a

job that provides financial security, is unionized, and that provides workers with strong bargaining power when it comes to negotiating agreements is beyond their wildest dreams. While hanging out with people working under the TFWP, we’re also constantly reminded of another provision of Western privilege: being able to speak English eloquently and without an accent shifts everyone’s attitude towards you, attracting more respectful treatment. You only see the tip of the iceberg of how difficult it is for these people to exercise their right to dignity and self-determination when you befriend people working as migrant workers. People of the Global North have a lot of work to do in order to do away with social structures and systems based on oppression that enable realities like this.

One more thing, the name Fuerza/Puwersa came to be because most of our support work with people working as migrant workers was with those who were Spanish and Filipino speaking. “Fuerza” means strength in Spanish and “Puwersa” means strength in Tagalog, which is one of the main dialects spoken in the Philippines.

**Erica:** I’m glad you explained that, I was wondering how the name was chosen. I noticed that Fuerza/Puwersa released a poster recently on Facebook calling out for help with Fuerza/Puwersa’s annual May Day Potluck and Panel Discussion. Fourth annual, congratulations.

**MaryCarl:** It’s been inspiring to be around such genuinely concerned crowds at the past three Potlucks.

**Erica:** Why is Fuerza/Puwersa organizing a May Day Potluck and Panel Discussion?

**MaryCarl:** Well, I’ll begin with explaining what May Day is. May Day is an annual event celebrated on May

1<sup>st</sup>. It's a day devoted to workers' rights, and the honouring of those participating in the struggles of working-class people throughout the world and history. It's celebrated internationally; it's also known as International Workers' Day. Apparently May Day first became an official holiday in the 1880s in the United States, with the fight for an eight-hour work day.

Three years ago, we were inspired to build on the history of the labour movement within Guelph, and incorporate a focus on the struggle for immigrant workers' rights and migrant justice. We were especially inspired by our experiences working with many immigrant women working under the Live-in Caregiver Program in and around Guelph. At that point, we'd been doing that for a year. We also felt it was incredibly important to spread the stories of people who are at the frontlines of immigrant justice struggles. These are the people we look to speak at the potlucks. We felt May Day was a great day to do this, plus almost everyone we knew loved potlucks. So, those were the prime reasons that moved us to organize the May Day Potluck. During this particular time, Toronto's annual May Day rally and march organized by No One Is Illegal-Toronto (NOII-TO) had already created a momentum with similar intentions. Fuerza/Puwersa members were very pumped about the idea of having a Guelph contingent participating in such a massive immigrant rights demonstration, so, accompanying the potluck, often a few days after, we hold a trip to the NOII-TO's march. We promote it as the "Guelph Workers' Solidarity Bus". This year will be the 7th annual NOII-TO May Day march. For the past two years, another May Day event has been going on in Toronto: The International Workers' Day (IWD) rally and march. Fuerza/Puwersa has also been organizing a presence at this march. The organizers are a coalition of working-class organizations and progressive allies called May 1<sup>st</sup> Movement. This coming May Day will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual IWD march. Both

marches are on the same day, but we manage to attend both! It helps that both are filled with day long events.

Also, for those of you who don't know, both NOII-TO and many of organizations that a part of the May 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, are grassroots migrant justice groups. Like, the Canadian Humanitarian Appeal for the Relief of Tamils, Migrant Ontario, and Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front- Toronto. Many of these organizations are led by people with working class and migrant and/or racialized backgrounds. The work of these groups in general involves working within the system, such as applying pressure to create healthier policies at the workplace or within Federal or Provincial legislation; media making; and lots of event organizing and support work. Collectively they all fight for the liberation of all people, working in opposition to imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, poverty, militarization, racism, patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression.

**Erica:** How very exciting. What can we expect from attending the May Day Potluck and Panel, and joining the "Guelph Workers' Solidarity Bus"?

**MaryCarl:** Well, there is an ongoing and increasing need to raise awareness about what is going on with the Canadian immigration system, its impacts, and why these things are happening. It's disturbing; more and more Canada is acting like the United States. With the Tories in power, we can expect a deepening of their regressive reforms that attack immigrants and migrants. Such reforms have consistently and blatantly violated Canada's obligations under the Canadian Charter, as well as a number of international human rights laws.

These were topics of focus at the May Day Potluck in 2009. The panel brought attention to the undeserved raids, detentions and deportations





**Above:** Member of Guelph-based T.I.A., Amina, brightened up the occasion with her passionate and original hip hop lyrics and melodies.



**Above:** Organized by Fuerza/Puwersa, this event was part of *The Humanizing Migration Project Series*, which included art and discussion-based awareness raising events about Canadian migrant worker issues.

PHOTO: TYLER YOUNG



**Left:** This photo was taken at a free “Know Your Rights” workshop with Karaoke for people working under the Live-in Caregiver Program

which happened that summer. The Canadian Border Services Agency and South Simcoe Police conducted US-style workplace and home raids on, and shortly after, deportations of over a hundred non-status workers. The unnecessary violence was happening in Simcoe, Toronto, Leamington and Windsor. They highlighted the dependence of both the Canadian ruling class and monopoly capitalism on poisoning the environment, as well as exploiting the masses by dividing them through campaigns encouraging discrimination and intolerance of people based on their ethnicity or origin. The panel featured community organizers of grassroots migrant justice organizations that had worked hard to raise awareness about the raids and hold the government accountable for its immoral use of power. A member of Justicia For Migrant Workers-Toronto, Migrante Ontario, and NOII-TO each spoke – all are independent, anti-imperial, racialized immigrant-led

groups that have low-income migrants in central positions in the work they do<sup>1</sup>.

Presenters from returnee groups NOII-TO, Migrante-Ontario, and first-time guest Canadian Humanitarian Appeal for the Relief of Tamils joined us for 2010’s May Day Potluck. Respectively, Mohan Mishra and Maru Maesa, who works as a live-in caregiver, alongside Pragash Antonipillai shared the stories of struggle of the communities that they are akin to, which are comprised of low income and working class immigrants. Their stories demonstrated the intensified trampling on free speech and democratic rights through the immigration system. Liz Rowley of the Community Party of Canada capped off the evening, speaking about the more militarist Canadian imperialism that we are seeing today, and on how Canada’s immigration system continues to place restrictions and pressures on immigrants, making it that much harder

<sup>1</sup> For the audio recording of the panel, visit: [radio4all.net](http://radio4all.net), and search: Migrant Matters Radio, then click on: Growing violence against working-poor migrants in Canada.

to get by. All speakers are involved with humanitarian, solidarity based, social-justice oriented work<sup>2</sup>.

We were graced with Phillip Allen's presence at last year's potluck. As per contractual requests from his Canadian employer, from 2003 to 2007, Phillip had been migrating to Canada from Jamaica each year. He was working here for 8 months of the year under the SAWP. Phillip Allen's kidneys failed in July 2007 allegedly because of lack of protection provided by his employers on the job. Since then, Phillip has been on regular dialysis<sup>3</sup> to remain alive. He currently is fighting a deportation order. A second speaker, community organizer with the organization Barrio Nuevo, Pablo Vivanco, spoke about the hypocrisy of both the global economic system and Canadian imperialism promoting migration, while the Tory government is cracking down on migration; and Canadian imperialism making the home countries of increasing numbers of populations unlivable. Kripa Sekhar, Director of the South Asian Women's Center in Toronto informed us about the continued funding cuts of public services for immigrants and newcomers by the Harper Tories and spoke on what Canadian imperialism's promotion of economic hardship means for women-identified immigrants. Migrante Ontario's Marco Luciano critiqued the continuation of temporary worker programs that deny full status; the increased avenues to dehumanize and deport people through Canada's immigration system; as well as Canada's military support for coups, invasions and occupations, such as in Haiti and Afghanistan.

With recent trends in immigration and refugee policy, we're seeing that the government is undermining any semblance of justice in terms of migrants and refugees' fundamental rights to constitutional protections of due process, equal protections, and fair procedures; and the number of people with precarious

status in Canada is growing and will continue to do so. For example, on February 16<sup>th</sup> of this year, Kenney tabled Bill C-31, which is essentially an immigration "omnibus" bill comprised of some of the most brutal elements seen in past bills. Passing C-31 would entrench and intensify the deprivation of migrants and refugees' fundamental rights to due process; and allow for the increased and mandatory incarceration of refugees, the establishment of an unjust two-tier system of refugee protection, and reduce eligibility for Permanent Resident status for accepted refugees in Canada<sup>4</sup>.

As another example, there is the unjust "double punishment", which is experienced by some immigrant residents, especially immigrant youth. Immigration and Refugee Protection Act states that individuals who are not citizens can face deportation if they are convicted of a criminal offence in Canada. Poor immigrants are over-targeted and over-prosecuted by the police and courts. This is the case even more so for poor immigrant youth and youth of colour, making them more vulnerable to the act. On top of being subjected to this institutionalized racism and having to face criminal repercussions such as jail time, those experiencing "double punishment" are also forced to go through dealing with an often inhumane and cold Immigration and Refugee Board, and have the problem of being state-ordered to be deported.

I'd also like to mention that despite Canada being known as a nation of immigrants, in 2008 the number of people brought here under the TFWP surpassed the number of landed immigrants. Hence, at this year's potluck we're planning to continue the discussion on Harper and Kenney moving to heighten Canada's aggression towards immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, and new Canadians; as well as the move to close routes to legal immigration through permanent residency and the refugee process.

<sup>2</sup>For the audio recording of the panel, visit: [radio4all.net](http://radio4all.net), and search: Migrant Matters Radio, then click on: Mayday panel - Speaking from the forefront of the struggle for (im)migrant justice and workers' rights.

<sup>3</sup>Dialysis is a medical procedure used to provide an artificial replacement for one's kidneys when they are damaged and can no longer filter toxins from the blood. Without it, Phillip's kidneys will fail in less than ten days and he will die. His gravely ill-health has made it impossible for him to do the strenuous work required for people working under the SAWP, thus resulting in Phillip's unemployment.

<sup>4</sup>To find out more about Bill C-31, visit [toronto.nooneisillegal.org](http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org)

# Strike as a Strategy Against Control

by Strike Everywhere

## THE SITUATION

**T**he lines of a ferocious struggle are crystallizing. In fact, it has been ongoing for decades, even centuries, but in the United States and elsewhere it has been strangely one-sided for some time. A class war from above has been assaulting us, with little visible response, outside of occasional outbursts from those most victimized and excluded by the system of domination and exploitation.

The global economic system has sustained itself, since the early 1970s, through the expansion of debt—corporate, household and state debt. The US has gone through an orgy of overconsumption; other countries exporting to the US market, an orgy of overproduction. Added to this already volatile situation was a massive amount of fraud and speculation, torrents of blood money for a repressive security-surveillance-industrial complex and imperial wars, the unprecedented acceleration of giant financial transactions, and, fundamentally, all the limits the capitalist delirium of eternal economic expansion and profit accumulation is bound to run into.

The inevitable disaster arrived in 2008. State and central bank bailouts saved the financial system, but the rest of us

have to live through the consequences: tremendous unemployment, home foreclosures, “austerity”—i.e. decimation of wages and benefits in the public sector, elimination of social services, etc. An enormous upwards transfer of wealth has been engineered. What was already a vicious neoliberal attack on ordinary people beginning in the Reagan-Thatcher years—depressed wages; spurs to new levels of productivity; a prison-industrial complex to exacerbate racial divisions, confine and torture those “superfluous” to the work-system, and send a warning to the rest of us—has blossomed into open destruction of our lives. Passivity and conformism were once the norm, but it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the social and political problems weighing down on us.

Capitalism has always meant exploitation by the bosses and oppression by state bureaucracies and police forces. Even during the Golden Age for the OECD zone (the richer countries) after World War II, there were of course strata of the population who suffered miserably while the middle classes entertained and distracted themselves with their newfound ability to consume. The fact that we are in world crisis does not change our basic perspective one bit; perhaps

- 1** . keynes-i-an  
adjective  
1. of or pertaining to the economic theories, doctrines, or policies of Keynes or his followers, especially the policy of maintaining high employment and controlling inflation by varying the interest rates, tax rates, and public expenditure.  
noun  
2. a person who maintains or supports the theories, doctrines, or policies of Keynes.



**Our task, our responsibility is not to rescue capitalism by advising its leaders, by demanding the concessions that, in the long run and on the whole, could in fact benefit the capitalist classes.**

it only adds to our determination to find ways to prevent capital from restructuring (or prevent elites from exiting capitalism into an even more barbaric system!). We know, at least since the revolts of 1968, that the rhythms of the “class struggle” do not necessarily follow those of the economy. But it is important to map the landscape, to orient ourselves and decide the best means of attack. The one given is that the national and world situations are ones of chaos and uncertainty, giving no reason to hold back or bide our time, in the hope that “better days” (or the “moment of collapse”) will arrive of their own accord. Every moment lost is a moment the ruling elites will use to their own advantage, to impose order and consolidate their position.

Many of the mainstream perspectives of “opposition” that have emerged recently have a nostalgic tinge; the defensive, backwards-looking idea that it is still possible to return to the “good old days” of Keynesian<sup>1</sup> class compromise, “full employment” and consumerism for (almost) all is implicit or explicit in all the arguments of liberal or “socialist” writers like Joseph Stiglitz, Paul Krugman, Doug Henwood, Dean Baker... their endless cries for more regulation, stimulus packages and jobs programs are falling on mostly deaf ears, however. The strategies of exploitation encapsulated by the word “austerity” (and the militarization of society that comes under the heading of the “War on Terror”) indicate that the capitalists’ stance has hardened. Today it has to be recognized that our masters are in no mood to deal. This

should have been obvious decades ago, when neoliberalism was introduced into France and Spain by “socialist” parties; today, it’s a party of social democrats that is imposing the severest austerity measures on the Greek people.

It’s a mystery why anyone would want to influence the politicians and policy-makers, anyway: to save the system from itself, producing the reforms that might insure its smoother functioning and place it on a more equilibrated path of development? Even if this were possible, it is something that must be rejected. Our task, our responsibility is not to rescue capitalism by advising its leaders, by demanding the concessions that, in the long run and on the whole, could in fact benefit the capitalist classes. If we are to do something other than help “manage” the crisis, we must refuse to be bought off with baubles and crumbs from the table. In our view, there has already been far too widespread a complicity, in the geopolitical “center” of the system, with its destructive nature. Liberal hegemony and what political philosopher Étienne Balibar has called “extremism of the center” are no longer really tenable options. Were the ruling classes to again offer an integrating project like that of Keynesianism, which at any rate seems unlikely, we would only find it detestable. Behind every concession is the structural necessity for capital and the state—and all the related institutions and everyday practices that form us and tend to compel our obedience—to devour our lives.

What is required is a vast upheaval in social values and political imaginaries, instrumented in the material force of a broad movement, and the complete destruction of all institutions of arbitrary authority and mechanisms by which a few monopolize the means of existence, compelling the rest of us to sell our lives for their profit. Social wealth is precisely that—social. Against a long, strict training that we’ve all received, we have to accustom ourselves to the idea that the exploiters

have no special right to use and control what all of us need. In fact, this idea is rapidly spreading, as the popular slogan “Everything for everyone!” makes clear.

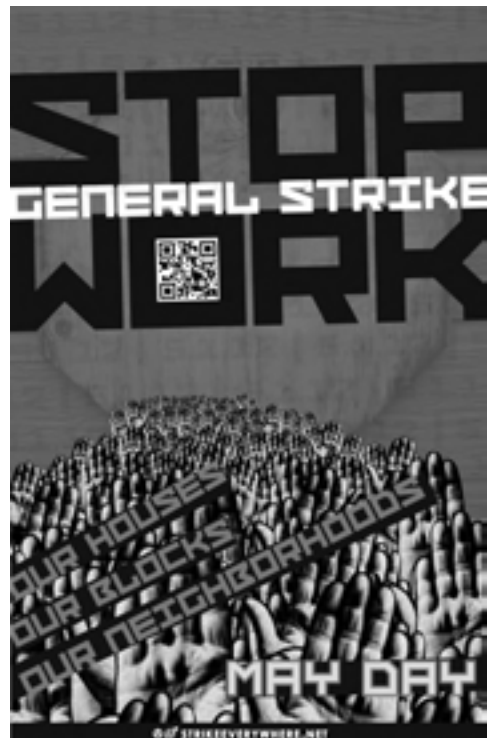
### THE GENERAL STRIKE

One of the most important weapons in our arsenal at the moment is the general strike—the mass withdrawal of labour. In the past, the general strike was seen, especially by anarchists and syndicalists (revolutionary trade unionists), as the overture to social revolution, the definitive denial that our lives are commodities to be bought and sold, and the abolition of wage labour. Today, of course, the general strike does not necessarily carry such potency, and can even be a routine event strictly managed by union leaderships and politicians, although it can also still have the immense advantage of representing a rupture with the daily grind, a stopping of the system, even if only for a moment. It sends a warning to the powers that be, and by clearing a space for further action, can lead to a contagion of refusal and autonomous initiatives that can inflict uncertainty on the powerful and point up their real weaknesses. By disrupting business as usual, the general strike can also effect real economic damage and hit our opponent where it hurts.

There are some who will argue that striking can hurt the strikers as much as the bourgeoisie. Besides the risk of being fired, many forms of striking are technically illegal in the US and Canada!—in other words, the law openly declares us to be slaves who have no choice but to prostitute ourselves for the bosses. In the first place, however, “striking” today can mean a whole variety of things, and totalitarianism hasn’t yet reached the point where calling in sick is a violation of federal law. Yes, that could mean losing a day’s pay (or more, if the strike spreads and prolongs itself, as it should). Let us not deceive ourselves: there’s no reason to make martyrs of ourselves, but fighting back will mean sacrifice. The courage

that has already been shown by protesters recently in the US and Canada should inspire us. The one way to guarantee that nothing changes, that we live and die as humiliated tools in conditions that will almost certainly worsen, is to do nothing and take no chances. The best way to minimize the hardships that accompany striking is to demonstrate unwavering solidarity with each other, practicing mutual aid, denouncing all scabbery, and encouraging everyone to participate in the struggle. The more of us strike, the less capable the bosses will be of finding ways to punish us.

In some ways we can carry out the general strike today without the illusions of the past, when a strong labour movement meant that striking centered things around the “worker” identity, and trade unions were the main, if not the only, actors on the stage. Today, most of us have an ambiguous relationship to work, at best. Capitalism itself has shown that it considers the labour of many of us to be “redundant,” and manipulates levels of unemployment to heights that would have been inconceivable a few decades ago. In Germany, the state subsidizes employers to reduce working hours, as another means of managing unemployment. When the authorities are even in favour of less work, how much further must we go with our revolutionary desires? Much of what we do to make a living is hardly vital from any reasonable standpoint—it’s just another way for someone somewhere to make money. Because unions have come under neoliberal attack, and in any



case have hardly shown themselves to be the determined defenders of workers' interests, their membership has plunged. It's more difficult than ever to be truly invested in one's work.

This means that perhaps for the first time, a "general" strike can be truly general, and take in wide swathes of the population, all who are dispossessed, disenfranchised, dissatisfied and ready to do combat. The precarious, the "unorganized," the unemployed, immigrants, women, queers, students, youth, prisoners, the homeless—it's up to each one of us to determine how best to define our struggle, which can no longer be a narrow "workers'" struggle, without getting trapped in any closed, rigid identities.

If more and more people are alienated from work, this is because it is experienced as one more form of social control. Often without any real social utility, usually rendering "services" with little intrinsic interest, performed in conditions over which we have little to no influence (unless we are one of the lucky stratum of semi-professionals and "creative types" who have the skills to manage and exploit their own "immaterial labour" without any direct supervision), work is simply a means to tranquilize and stupefy. Like the school or the prison, the workplace is now clearly just another site for Power to mold us and keep the machine running. Since capital and the state have sought to impinge on every area of daily life, antagonism has spread to all fields of social control, and the opportunities for resisting are that much wider.

Nearly every one of us now has cause for some serious grievances against the system. In New York City, the scene is grim. New York State and New York City have the highest income inequality of any state or metropolitan area in the country, which is itself one of the most unequal in the world. While not all of Bloomberg's threatened 2012 budget cuts to jobs, child care, care for the elderly, fire companies, schools, libraries, Medicaid, etc. passed,

it's of course absurd for the City Council to congratulate itself on merely mitigating somewhat the suffering implied by cuts. Unemployment is high and growing, and benefits are running out. Tens of thousands of people are living without a home. We must begin creating non-state, non-market ways of meeting our essential needs, now. The NYPD, as usual, continues to wallow in corruption, crack down on political dissent, and spy on Muslims, while its officers rape women, harass and murder young men, and lock people in steel cages.

The general strike and the spirit it incarnates should provide an impetus for working New Yorkers, waged and non-waged, to overcome their isolation and atomization. We must immediately begin building international connections as well, strengthening a worldwide revolutionary movement that can sustain itself with the resources reclaimed by millions of people. What exactly the May Day strike entails can only be answered by self-organization; i.e. it's up to each of us to reach out and find ways to struggle with others. It is time we took responsibility for our own lives, acting directly in our own names, and for putting an end to the atrocities inflicted on us, and on others by our government. A period of fierce resistance, but also experimentation, is about to open. Blockades to end an economy that doesn't serve our needs will be only the beginning. As Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James has observed, "The rich are only defeated when running for their lives."

May Day should mark a new beginning, a Spring that releases massive creative energies. It would be foolish to try to predict from what exact direction those energies will come. All we can do is act. The social theorist Castoriadis once remarked that "The sole criterion of differentiation within the mass of wage earners that remains relevant for us is their attitude toward the established system." That is, will you fight or not? The future depends on the answer.

*www.strikeeverywhere.net/strike-as-strategy-against-control/*

# Call for Insurrection Days

## **WE DON'T DEMAND ANYTHING, WE WANT EVERYTHING!**

**P**eople all over the world are taking their protest to the streets, fighting for their rights and freedom to overturn the current conditions. But why not here? The German reality is marked by social exclusion and cuts in the supply of basic essentials. Simultaneously, the media is brainwashing people's mind against every existing resistance that criticises this inhuman oppression by the state and capital. It isn't just the police who beat us up or arrest us and it isn't just the political legislative which establishes laws to enslave us. Also responsible are those people who are not offering resistance to this situation and those who are making it possible through their ever-so-important (wage-) labour so that the "machinery of administration" runs smoothly. This machinery kills in agreement with German bureaucracy whether on the street or from one's desk. Silence gives consent. We don't know why hardly anyone says "Stop!". Maybe it is because it is not yet bad enough for people or is it just the result of a traditional submissiveness resulting from centuries of monarchist and subsequently fascist leadership, which is burnt in people's brains. There are nearly no noteworthy protests in Germany against the current shitty situation. That's a fact. For sure, there are demonstrations which are

sometimes joined by a quarter of a million people but the majority of these people, most of whom are members of parties and unions, are therefore directly responsible for what is going on here. Besides, these people are not willing to fight for real changes. Just complain and that's all. Real changes would mean the loss of one's own social rank and of all the privileges with which some people have made themselves damn comfortable. For example, economic privileges that exist because other parts of the world were continually ransacked. These conditions have been maintained for a long time with brutal force.

## **WHY WE DON'T DEMAND ANYTHING!**

It makes no sense to go to a government with a list of demands. You cannot hope to find sympathetic ears in a political system which puts power into the hands of politicians who are not even elected by a quarter of the people. They will not listen to concerns dealing with people's lives but will instead focus on issues with capitalistic relevance. That is why it makes absolutely no sense for us present a list of demands to a government.

We do not have to submit to the rule of those who want to control us!

We do not have to degrade ourselves by pleading and begging!



We have to make sure that the things we don't like do not exist any more!

It is absolutely possible for us to live a self-determined life. But this will only work if the if the state's repressive apparatus is smashed, if the government is overturned, if the "cop-in-your-head" is killed and to break free from your self-imposed boundaries. Afterwards it will be possible to replace the logic of capitalist values with collective self-organisation. A fight against the system has to be a part of our everyday life, as anti-hierarchical as possible and we have to show solidarity to one another.

### INSURRECTION DAYS

For many people it is difficult to find access, to organize themselves and to act beyond their own borders. We want to give you an opportunity to get to know one another, to create networks, to fight together and to learn from each other. Together we want to try to take the initiative and to create a climate of insecurity and fear for the state and social authorities, at least for a couple of days. Its aim is to shock the normative structure of the state and social authorities, consequently to question the state's monopoly on violence. On May Day the police know where and when it could kick-off and were well organized in recent years. However the nights and days before should be defined by us. Sometimes colourful but also in black. Sometimes peaceful and decisive but also with fiery rage.

Insurrection Days

26<sup>th</sup> of April – 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2012  
Berlin//Everytime // Everywhere

[www.insurrectiondays.noblogs.org](http://www.insurrectiondays.noblogs.org)

ILLUSTRATION: JARED DAVISON (OCCUPYPRINT.ORG)



NEVER IN  
HISTORY DID THE  
RICH & POWERFUL  
GIVE UP THEIR  
PRIVILEGES  
VOLUNTARILY

# MAYDAY

**Their distress signal. Our battle cry.**

POSTER: ICONOCLAST MEDIA

**May 01. 2012**

# GENERAL STRIKE

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